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STARBURST™

A COLOUR PREVIEW OF

Return To
OZ

PLUS
JEFF BRIDGES ON
STARMAN

AN ANIMATED
DISCUSSION
WITH JOHN HALAS

PATRICK McGOOHAN
DANGER MAN



MOVIE COMICS

STARBURST

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• OPINION •

This year the *National Film Theatre* is presenting a series of lectures by some of Britain's top professionals in the field of animation. They include such luminaries as Bob Clampett, Richard Williams and John Halas. What their informative lectures have shown is a diversity of ideas and talent. It's fair to point out that John Halas and Bob Godfrey both share a similar outlook on animation technique. Richard Williams, on the other hand, favours a style more in keeping with the golden age of animation. All are responsible for a wide variety of film and television productions, being among the most creative in the media today.

As this is also the *Year of Animation*, it is appropriate that BBC 2 is screening a series of programmes featuring animated shorts from around the world, called *Animation Now*. Some are ingenious feats of graphic design, whilst others concentrate on storytelling. But don't misunderstand me. Just because a drawing moves well doesn't necessarily make it a work of art. *Animation Now* has had its fair share of pretentious claptrap, indicating how some modern animators fail to realise the importance of film editing. In their view, every frame is brought to the screen with its fair share of blood, sweat and tears, and they haven't got the courage to cut a single one out. What this achieves is an ego trip for the artist concerned and a boring ten minutes or more, for the viewer.

UNANIMATED AUDIENCES

Unfortunately the 'animation festival' has now failed to tell the difference between the good and the bad. It intel-



Bob Clampett

Animation as Art? Bob Clampett, one of Warner Brothers' most notorious artists from their "Golden Age" tackles the subject.

lectualises and thus misses the real problem which lies not in the presentation so much as in the storyboard. The *Annecy Film Festival* in 1983 had the audacity to promote rubbish such as *Diptych* (Fatamorgana Parts 1 and 2) from Poland, as one of the best examples of world animation. Described as "the alienation of man's work from the realm of nature", it only succeeded in alienating the rather stuffy NFT audience from the cinema screen itself. Films such as these, about walking blocks of flats, are not even worthy of inclusion in *Monty Python*. They give animation a bad name and they encourage critics to make snide com-

ments that animated films are either for children or artists, appealing to no other audience.

It's disappointing to think that films such as *Diptych* will continue to damage the case for world animation, constantly relegating it to the darker recesses of the private cinema club. If it can be argued that animation is only about self-expression, then let those who practice it lock themselves away with their creations. Let the film students leave their experiments behind in the classroom. I, for one, do not wish to see them.

Richard Holliss

LETTERS

SHOWS OF THE PAST

Bravo to Sasha Simic regarding *Starburst's* ever-diminishing coverage of television fantasy (Letters, SB79). Oh, certainly, this issue of *Starburst* was a real treat for TV fantasy fans but these "TV Specials" are the exception rather than the rule. I've always believed that *Starburst* is at its best when covering television—so come on! Let's have less publicity shots of David Bowie and more TV coverage, okay?

The features on *Adamant* and *The Outer Limits* were great—Sally Gary's *Star Trek* feature, less so: I don't think I've read a prose style like hers since Stan Lee's "Bulldog Bulletins" back in the good old days. Oh, and if the Queen of Trivia thinks that I'm going to swallow the bait and start arguing about the quality of *Lost in Space*, then I'm afraid she's going to be dreadfully disappointed. Incidentally, if Sally's going to do a "question/answer" column, she may as well do it properly: not only was Robert Fuest a set designer on the early (videotaped) days of *The Avengers*—nine episodes during the first (Ian Hendry) season, and one episode in the second (Honor Blackman) season—but Fuest also directed seven episodes during the hugely underrated Linda Thorson season: *Game, They Keep Killing Steed*, *The Rotters*, *Take Me To Your Leader*, *Pandora*, *Take-Over and My Wildest Dream*. Sal also mentions the stars who provided the voices for the puppet series *Space Patrol* (Libby Morris, Dick Vosburgh, Ronnie Stevens and Murray Cash) and asks "where are they now?"—as if they plunged into obscurity. Well, Libby Morris still turns up on panel games, Ronnie Stevens is still acting (most recently in *Cover Her Face*, Dick Vosburgh was/is a well-known scriptwriter and Murray Cash, er, I dunno.



Above: The good old days of *Doctor Who*? William Hartnell with Maureen O'Brien and Jean Marsh (the Wicked Witch of *Return to Oz*—see page 10).

Can we please have at least one "TV Special" which does not include the cardboard antics of *Doctor Who*? Any series which can have people like Faith Brown and Sarah Greene in the cast list must be about ready for cancellation by now, surely? For me, there can only be one Doctor, and that was the late William Hartnell. When he left the show, that was it as far as I was concerned. The series since his departure has been poor, and I can't understand its popularity at all. Producer John Nathan-Turner has brought a brass vulgarity to the series which would never have been allowed back in the good old days. Time to call it a day, I think: enough is enough. What, I wonder, do your other readers think (said he, putting on his tin hat and bulletproof vest)?..

Graham P. Williams,
Mayhill, Swansea.

THE STAR WARS STORY

After watching all three existing *Star Wars* films several times and reading the novels based on each, I have come

up with an educated guess as to some of the events to be shown in episodes one to three. From the novel of *Return of the Jedi*, it can be learned that the Old Republic, which constituted most of the galaxy, eventually became too large for its own good. For over a thousand generations, the Republic prospered and grew, under the benevolent rule of the Imperial Senate (dissolved by the Emperor in *Star Wars*) and under the protection of the Jedi knights. As is told in the prologue of the novel of *Star Wars*, the bureaucracy required to maintain the order of the Republic grew to unimaginable proportions and inevitably, corruption had set in. This corruption of the old ideals and laws brought with it violence and evil, and many of the delegates in the Imperial Senate became disillusioned with their power and hungered after galactic domination. One such was the young Senator Palpatine, who dreamed of creating a 'new order' (much like the young Adolf Hitler in our own history). He soon gained the following of many of the other corrupt Senators and, through political intrigue

and deception, Palpatine managed to get himself elected Supreme President of the Republic. Through fraud, bribery and twisted ambition, he proclaimed himself Emperor. With his loyal, but corrupt, followers, Senator, now Emperor Palpatine, created the Galactic Empire. Also, to protect his New Order against threat of Rebellion, the Emperor formed a vast fleet of spacecraft and an equally vast ground army to carry out his plans. The Imperial fleet soon quelled any immediate opposition to Palpatine's claim to power.

Having established his Empire, Palpatine increased his forces' strength by utilising the latest advances in genetic engineering. Drawing upon the results of experiments carried out by evil Imperial scientists, the genetic engineers under the Emperor's command commenced an investigation into the possibility of cloning soldiers. Through years of experiments, the scientists came up with the perfect fighting man. The Emperor gave the order for cloning to begin in earnest and the dreaded Imperial Stormtroopers were born.

Using his immense armies,

the Emperor set out to destroy the last of the Jedi knights, several of whom had escaped the downfall of the Republic. In the novel of *The Empire Strikes Back*, we are told that the Emperor was assisted in this task by a group of evil warriors who wore armoured space-suits, the same as that worn by Boba Fett in episodes five and six of the saga. Perhaps Fett himself is a survivor of this band of warriors. Many systems still opposed the Galactic Empire and many of them joined forces to form what became known as the Rebel Alliance. Although the Rebel Alliance did not command nearly enough spacecraft to overcome the Imperial fleet, they launched attack after attack on the Emperor's forces. This series of battles became known as the Clone Wars.

Meanwhile, the Jedi knights were involved in a plan to increase their numbers. One student Jedi being trained at this time was a young man called Anakin Skywalker. His teacher, General Obi-Wan Kenobi, had taken on young Skywalker as an apprentice and, instead of sending the aspiring pupil to the planet Dagobah, to train under Yoda, the supreme Jedi master, decided to attempt to teach Anakin himself. Although Kenobi made a good attempt to train the young man in the ways of the Force, he did not know that the Emperor too, though not a Jedi, was also a master of the Force and used the power he gained from its Dark Side to keep his corrupt Empire

together. At a crucial time of decision in Anakin Skywalker's training as a Jedi, the Emperor tempted him away from Kenobi and offered him a powerful position in the Empire's elite command. Kenobi's training had not been enough and Anakin Skywalker succumbed to the temptations of the Dark Side of the Force. He left Kenobi and his wife to take his place at the Emperor's right hand. What Skywalker did not know was that his wife was pregnant when he left. She gave birth to twins, Luke and Leia. Obi-Wan Kenobi knew, as did the Emperor, that if Anakin Skywalker were to have any children, they too could be trained as Jedi knights and could eventually become a threat to the power of the Empire. If the Emperor discovered the existence of the twins, he would attempt to corrupt their souls as he had their father's. In the novel of *Return of the Jedi*, the events that followed the birth are revealed by the spirit of Obi-Wan Kenobi. The girl, Leia, was taken to the peaceful planet Alderaan, where she and her mother were taken in by Senator Organa. Kenobi took the boy, Luke, to the planet Tatooine, where the child was adopted by Kenobi's brother, Owen Lars. In an effort to turn Anakin from the course he had taken, Kenobi confronted his former pupil and tried to persuade him to return to the Good Side of the Force. This angered Anakin and the two of them fought. Kenobi, defending himself, knocked Skywalker backwards into a

volcanic pit, from which he eventually emerged, horribly scarred. The Imperial scientists and surgeons fitted him with a special suit, with a built-in life support system. Skywalker also had to wear a black metal helmet and mask, which enabled him to breathe and lead as normal a life as was possible. Several of his vital organs were replaced with synthetic implants and his right arm was substituted by a bionic limb.

This ordeal only seemed to increase Skywalker's hate for his former teacher. He took a new name, calling himself Darth Vader, and swore that he would finally destroy the last of the Jedi himself.

Obi-Wan Kenobi, meanwhile, took refuge on Tatooine, where he watched young Luke Skywalker grow up. Shunned by his brother Owen, Obi-Wan took to living a near-isolated existence in a small desert house, but still kept an eye on Luke's progress. Owen Lars was a farmer and had never held with his brother's ideals. As Kenobi says in the film *Star Wars*, Owen was afraid of losing Luke and terrified at the idea that he could be tempted away by the Emperor or the way his father was. For this reason, Owen never revealed to Luke who his real father was and told the boy that he was the son of a navigator on a spice freighter. Leia, Luke's sister, grew up in the care of the high-born Organa family on Alderaan. The Organa family (as we are told in the novel of *Return of the Jedi*) were politically quite powerful in the Alderaan system. Leia's true

identity was hidden and she was brought up as one of Senator Organa's own children, becoming a princess, but as Alderaan was a democracy, it was a title without any real power. When she was old enough, Leia was enrolled as a Senator, and also she became a leader of the cell of the Rebel Alliance situated on Alderaan. Because of her diplomatic immunity, she proved to be a vital link for gaining information needed by the Rebel Alliance to plan their attacks. Darth Vader, having never slackened in his search for the last of the Jedi knights, finally traced the Rebel spies to Leia and set out to capture her. The Rebel Alliance had recently succeeded in securing a complete set of plans for the Empire's new armoured space-station, the Death Star. Because it was believed that she would not be suspected of treachery towards the Empire, Leia was entrusted with the plans and she attempted to take them to her father on Alderaan. Darth Vader intercepted her on her journey, however, and she was taken prisoner. Senator Organa had always told her to contact Obi-Wan Kenobi on Tatooine, if she ever needed help desperately. Without knowing that her captor was her own true father, Leia hid the Death Star plans in the memory banks of a robot, R2-D2, and sent it to Tatooine to search for Obi-Wan Kenobi. And at this point the film *Star Wars* takes up the story.

S. Kill
Eastleigh, Hants.

FLICKERS by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett

Edward P. Sloth, film critic of
the YORKSHIRE SENTINEL...

A PATHETIC PERFORMANCE...
THE LEAD ACTOR'S £1
MILLION FEE IS AN INSULT
TO THIRD RATE ACTORS
EVERYWHERE... STORY
LINE SEEMS TO
HAVE BEEN
WRITTEN
BY LASSIE
AFTER A
LOBOTOMY...

THE FILM IS AS ABSORBING
AS WATCHING PAINT DRY....
THE DIRECTOR HAS LESS
VISUAL SENSE THAN A DEAD
MOLE....
WELL, THAT'S THE
REVIEW WRITTEN.
NOW I SUPPOSE
I'D BETTER...

...GO AND SEE
THE DAMN
THING!

ODEON

NOW SHOW

PAINT
DRIES

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

30 YEARS ON

To begin at the beginning. . . Dylan Thomas wrote his one, and only, movie script 30 years ago for, of all the uninspired companies, Rank Organisation. End of story. CUT to 1960 – and the late Nicholas Ray prepared to shoot the scenario in Yugoslavia. Money ran out. End of second attempt. CUT to Shepperton studios today – Mel Brooks has finally got it rolling with Twigg, *Brazil* nut Jonathan Pryce, Timothy Dalton and Beryl Reid among others. Freddie Francis is directing. He was the cameraman on David Lynch's *Elephant Man*, also for Brooksfilm, and is an old Hammer hand, of course. "So there might be some good scares," he agrees, "but not on the scale of a horror movie." Oh no? Difficult to avoid that as Dylan's *The Doctor And The Devils* is his version of the body-snatching life and times (1830s in Edinburgh) of Dr Knox and the reprobates providing his anatomical research with fresh corpses (often, too warm), Burke and Harel.

Peter Cushing played the good/bad doctor once, in *The Flesh And The Fiends* (1960). He knew all about him, because Cushing always said that Knox was his "definite inspiration" for his roles as Frankenstein. As always, Cushing checked the original source (Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, Conan Doyle, etc) for his roles, but Knox's will to succeed best matched that of the similarly crusading Frankenstein. "Ruthless," summed up Peter, "coupled with a genuine desire to improve the lot of mankind."

ALIAS STEVE KING

Read any good Bachmans lately? You've had five to choose from since 1977. Good thrillers by Peter Bachman, that is. Never heard of him? You will! Filmmakers impatient for the next Stephen King book to buy for filming are turning to Bachman instead. Steve's not worried. Steve is Peter Bachman. He finally let the cat out of the bag in the American newspaper, the *Bangor Dailey News*. There was, he said, too much 'stuff' on sale under his own name. So, he floated some of his backlog under the Bachman alias. Next, signed by King, is *Skeleton Crew*.



BARON GILLIAM OF BRAZIL

The hype began, as it always does, at last year's Cannes fest. Terry Gilliam would follow up *Brazil* with *The Improbable Adventures of Baron Munchausen I and II*. 'Honestly!' added the ads. And to be shot in 'twelve countries, including Russia, Red China, Zimbabwe, Kuwait, Malaysia, Sweden, Argentina, Panama, Australia, North and South Poles. With Hollywood and international stars, including 50 leading actors and actresses and 450 supporting players, at the cost of \$200 million – according to Baron Munchausen!

Gilliam's been doing his homework. He discovered the story was

first written in English. "So, it's time for an English-speaking Baron," he muses. "I've seen the other films. Or, part of the German one. Terrible! The character was all wrong, so I stopped watching. I like the Czech animation one better – live-action in front of drawn backgrounds. Really nice! Melies did one 11-minute adventure. I've also seen the Russian TV version which is diabolically bad. Nothing of the real Munchausen spirit at all."

And the version according to Gilliam? "I don't know exactly how to do the film yet. Except that, like *Brazil*, it carries on the idea of fantasy and reality, lies and truth."

HARRISON MAKES IT!

No matter what *Burt Reynolds* pays his press agent to say, we all know that our guy, *Harrison Ford*, has been America's No. 1 box-office star since 1977. He's the lynchpin of five of the top ten films in movie history. And yet, *Harrison* could walk down Main Street and no one would take a second glance. He has, though, finally made it on his own, free of *Lucasberger* stunts 'n' effects in *Peter Weir's* *Witness*. *Ford's* Philadelphia cop is running second only to *Eddie Murphy's* Beverly Hills one as the biggest money-makers in the US as of now. Good for him!



OTHERWORLDS

Universal's new SF series for the tube, *Otherworld*, is less of a V than a blatant retreat of Irwin Allen's forgettable sixties show, *Lost In Space*. Classier, I grant you, but the premise remains the same. What we have here is *The Space Family Robinson*! Canadian actor Sam Groom (ex-*Police Surgeon*) is the paterfamilias of this family unit which, unlike Allen's, doesn't choose to quit a crowded globe for a quieter spot in the galactic sub-

urbs. Groom's group was simply being tourists in an Egyptian tomb when six planets forming a unique configuration simply, well, whisk them off to this other place. According to the plot, by producer-writer Roderick Taylor, his fantasyland has some 77 sections to it. Exploring one a week covers enough for two seasons of the series. . . In the first show Groom and Co. hit a 1984ish society of androids. Plus a supporting cast including everyone's Favourite Martian, Ray Walston.

ANOTHER DISNEY?

Suddenly, all the junked Disney men seem to be The One who brought the failing studio into the 1980s before the recent ousting of their boss, Ron Miller. But not all their publicists speak with forked tongues. The last guy I mentioned, Richard Berger, was the one creating the Touchstone label and this month's newsmaker, Thomas L. Wilhite, was the reason why. . . Tom, you see, developed *Splash*, *Never Cry Wolf*, the first films for the Disney TV channel and yes, (well, whisper it) *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. (You can't win 'em all, Tom!) Since

leaving Disney, Tom's chatted to the right folk with the right connections and formed Hyperion Entertainment with an ex-Disney story editor, Willard Carroll.

Tom's movies, low-budget, he insists, and non-union (hence: low-budgets!), range from a Martian caper, *Little Green Men* and a new script from one of the *Splash* writers, *The Smallest Show On Earth*, to *Voice of the Night*, a thriller from the couple responsible for Disney's *Baby*; and a John Candy comedy, *Ditto*, written by John Cleese and (also directed by) Graham Chapman, of the Python gang. Plus a zombie number, *They're Coming To Take You Away* (hal hal), which Tom says will be like George Romero meeting Jerry Lewis – 'except not grotesque'.

In London, he's producing *Very Far Away*, with the fantasy book author and illustrator, Maurice Sendak, directing the first film of his work. And on the animation front, Tom's already begun *The Brave Little Toaster*, from Thomas Disch's novella. Disney cancelled that one when working out the costs at \$17 million. Tom says that with old Disney artists and new ones from the California Arts Institute, he can make it for \$7 million – 'and retain the same quality'.

HECTIC WORLD

Anything Hyperion can do, Corman's old New World can do better. It steps up the action with twenty movies this year, soaking up 50 million big ones. Naturally, with smooth Bob Rehme in charge, many of these are designed with us in mind. Excepting *Tourist*. Bob wants Jerry Lewis for that one. As for the rest, take a deep \$50m breath... John Carpenter has written *Black Moon Rising*, for Tommy Lee Jones, and *Chickenhawk*, about 'Nam chopper pilots – and he might direct that one. Ex-John Boorman writer, Rosco Pallenberg, will direct his scripts of *Last Man On Earth* and *Robot*. Larry Cohen is making *Boston Blackie*, while Wes Craven arranges *Flowers in the At-*

tlic. *Tremors* comes from Cliff and Ellen Green, the *Baby* authors, already on the Hyperion slate, as well. Paul Wilson's creepy novel, *The Tomb* is going through the script stages and Canada has another try at SF with *Defenders*. The inevitable zombie tango (well, this is *The Day of the Dead* year) is *Monster Night*, from the team behind the surprise hit, *Night of the Comet* (don't miss that one!).

My favourite title on the New World programme is one supplying directors' spurs for ex-Mel Brooks scribe, Rudy De Luca. He's already pinned down new Landis star, Jeff Goldblum, as a sleaze journalist sent to find Frankenstein's monster. Rudy calls it... *Transylvania 6.50000*.

FANTASPORTO V

The Jorge tragedy cast a definite pall over the fifth Fantaspporto festival, opening a few days later in Portugal. Jorge was a great buddy and support of the organisers of this fast-rising Porto event, Mario Dorminsky and Beatrix Pacheco. The show must go on, though. And it did. Excellently, I hear. For Neil Jordan, anyhow. *Company of Wolves* won Best Film and SPFX awards, plus prizes from both critics and public. Neil lost out to West German Carl Schenk and *Out Of Order*, though, as Best Director. John Hurt (as Winston Smith) shared the actor's trophy with French rock 'n' roller Eddy Mitchell as *Frankenstein 90* (which was also voted top script). No such indecision among the actresses. Adriana Herran romped it in the Colombian entry, *Flesh of Your Flesh*.

I doubt if my votes would have changed matters. But for certain, well, domestic issues, I should have been on the jury. So, my thanks to director Laurens Postma for sitting in as the UK representative. I'll be there next year, February 7-15, if Mario and Beatrix will have me. Even if they won't. I owe them.

DARIO STRIKES AGAIN!

He never managed to sign up the daughter of Ingmar Bergman and Liv Ullmann as planned, but Dario Argento surpasses himself with *Phenomena*. A bunch of his usual fetishes abound – the Richard Wagner School for Girls has twisted women teachers and The Goblins pin back your ears

on the very LOUD soundtrack. This time, though, Dario controls his more tiresome traits and mad as the story is (has to be, right?), he's in control from start to finish. Patrick Bauchau is the cop, Donald Pleasance is paralysed, and Liv Ullmann's replacement is Leone's find for *Once Upon A Time In America*, the smashing Jennifer Connelly... as an etymological *Carrie*.



The Italian Phenomena – Dario Argento focuses.

THE LUCAS RIDE

George Lucas and Disney have joined forces. Not for a film. For Disneyland style attractions. The first is for Disneyland itself – a *Star Wars* ride for the playpen at Anaheim, not the one in Japan, nor the one destined for Europe. (Spain and France are still trying to outbid each other to host that park.) The Lucas ride, the first of several ideas he has, boasts 'technology never seen before.' I understand that Spielberg has also been asked to come up with a similar gimmick – a close encounter with E.T.? Could be a useful test-run before either of them, or in harness, come up with their own Lucasbergerland.

As for a Lucas-Disney movie, that could happen. The new bosses of Uncle Walt's playgrounds have devised a clever scheme to raise \$100 million to finance future films on a share-the-load basis. Lucas had until May to decide to throw some of his money into the pot – or simply suggest a film to use some of that extraordinary bundle. Same goes for Spielberg. Watch this space.

R.I.P.

Usually, it is filmmakers we honour in this obituary section: maybe an allied genre author or two. Sadly, and with great shock, I'm paying tribute this month to someone you've probably never heard of, although he's been mentioned here enough times over the years. Jorge Lluemas died very suddenly, and absurdly young, two months before his greatest achievement – widening his much respected Imagific fantasy festival into the Madrid International Film Festival. He's a great loss to our genre; to the tireless support of it. Jorge had worked in Spanish film distribution and production before creating Imagific in 1980. Since then he'd organised it to increasing perfection with his wife, Rita Sonleva. I met them two years ago when Jorge and I served on the jury of the first Brussels fantasy festival – one of the many following Jorge's lead. He was a grand fella; an even greater SF buff. Hence, Imagific, of course. He wanted, quite simply, to spread the word.

THINGS TO COME.

He was spreading the action for March, allowing his once tiny event to encompass a planned 190 films over nine days, covering everything ancient and modern, from *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* to *Blood Simple*. They were due in various ways – in competition, in retrospectives of mysteries, experimental, expressionist, animation or film noir, tributes to Fellini, Russ Meyer, Saul Bass and a former Imagific jurist, Sam Peckinpah; in exhibitions of Bass' posters, Pasolini photos, make-up by Savini, Baker, Bottin. Plus five midnight screenings and – like they did in Retiro Park in the summer – the ritual finale marathon of five movies, non-stop.

Getting that little lot together takes blood, sweat and tears. Jorge and Rita gave it their best shot, every year. A dynamite couple! This year, Jorge's dynamo burnt out. He was found dead from a heart attack while on a couch at home watching TV. He was... 28. And the fantasy circuit won't be the same without him and his Imagific fire. *Adios, Jorge*.

EXPLORING

Producer of Ford's hit is Edward S. Feldman, previously known (7) for making... *Hot Dog – The Movie*. We all have to start somewhere. *Witness* has put Mr Ed in the big league. His next film should keep him there. It's Joe Dante's *Explorers* – cannily saved from the garbage by Ed. When he showed it to 20th Century Fox, the script was turned down. When he showed it to Paramount, he had a deal in 24 hours. Why? None too pleased with the end of Eric Luke's script, Ed showed only the 'extraordinary' first 60 pages to Paramount! Luke, who used to work in SPFX, changed the finale – and won himself a studio deal, too. For more scripts. So far, Joe Dante, Rob Bottin (supplying the aliens) and ILM are the only stars of the movie.

ENEMIES

Explorers should have been Wolfgang Petersen's next movie after *Neverending Story*. Except he wanted, as per usual, to shoot at his favourite Bavaria Film Studio in Munich. Feldman didn't mind. Paramount did – too far from ILM. So, what's

Petersen doing instead? Making *Enemy Mine* at Bavaria with ILM handling the SPFX! I recently spent two days with him and his stars – 'alien' Lou Gossett and 'spacemen' Dennis Quaid – and will be filing a full report before taking off for Cannes. Suffice to say that for now Ed Feldman says his film is a fantasy 'of people, not high tech'. ... exactly what Petersen says about his movie. It's fast becoming the new Science Fiction anthem. Truth is, *Explorers* is a Spielbergian tale of 14-year-olds. *Enemy Mine* is rather more adult.

VERY SPECIAL EFFECTS

Year by year, the heavyweight film festivals are ripping-off the smaller fantasy events – turning to our genre to put them in the headlines. E.T. was premiered at Cannes in 1982, remember. *WarGames* turned up the next year. Harrison Ford flew to Venice two years on the trot (*Blade Runners* of the Lost Ark!). Berlin beat them all this year with a huge – but gigantic! – retrospective and exhibition devoted to 80 years of SPFX. Rolf Giesen and Hans Helmut Prinzler worked so hard arranging it, they needed extra US finance to ship voluminous Hollywood treasures to their exhibition – and the seminal films were so many, the SPFX event had to start one week before Berlin's 35th film fortnight!

But... how to cover such a mammoth undertaking in a few lines? Well, it ran the full gamut from George Melies to Richard Edlund. There were films from the pioneers like Melies, Guido Seeber, Abel Gance, the 30s' work of Russian Alexander Ptusko, 1942's *Munchausen* plus... oh, everybody... Cocteau, Harryhausen, Jim Danforth, George Pal, Rick Baker, Willis O'Brien's *Lost World*, King Kong and Son of Kong, Eiji Tsuburaya's *Godzilla*, Metropolis to Close Encounters in the SF section, Peter Ellenshaw and Danny Lee's *Disney* toil in Darby O'Gill and Mary Poppins, and that of Theo Nischwitz in the West German TV series. *Space Patrol*, and in Wolfgang Petersen's *The Boat*... and... and... But nothing from Lucasfilm. Is he keeping it all for Disneyland – or Lucasland?

Then, not far off in the Berlin equivalent of Selfridges, the exhibition dwarfed anything staged previously by Tokyo and New York. Hollywood collections had been ransacked, and there was the miniature *Nautilus* from 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea (a great making-of documentary was among the films, by the way). The Thing's arm (Hawks' original, of course), masks, sketches, models, designs, etc. etc. from Metropolis, King Kong, Frankenstein, Valley of Gwangi and from the film chosen to open Berlin '85 – 2010.



Sting and Jennifer Beals in a scene from *The Bride*, due for a summer release in London.

ENTER: THE LANDIS ALL-STARS!

John Landis takes the movie-brats' buff-stuff to new heights in his movie whirlwind, *Into The Night*. He asked 16 of his favourite directors to play cameo roles. Make that 17 – for Landis trots on himself.

As not all directors are as readily recognisable as, say, Spielberg or Landis, there's going to be an awful lot of argument about who is/isn't in the film. So, as with our Fantasy Film Chart, this is 'settle your bets' time. The guest film-makers, in order of appearance are: Andrew Marton, David Cronenberg, Richard Franklin, Colin Higgins, Daniel Petrie, Jonathan Kaufer, Paul Mazursky, Paul Bartel, Don Siegel, Jim Henson, Jack Arnold, Amy Heckerling, Roger Vadim, Larry Kasdan, Jonathan Demme and Carl Gottlieb.

SHORT DUNGEONS

Charlie Band's other new release – it escaped, more like it – is his 1983 *Ragewar*, under its new title and hype, *The Dungeonmaster*. Charlie loves running twowords together, his latest collisions are *Terrorvision* and *Crimelord*. Not a lot to be said in favour of his dungeon's role for Jeffrey Byron (*Metalstorm*'s plastic, blow-up hero). It certainly differs greatly from how Charlie described it to me during the '83 Cannes fest – maybe he thought I was a film buyer. It's no longer the big 3D number it was designed as, either. The film's greatest claim to fame is that it's the shortest feature on record this side of a Woody Allen flick. The action lasts 67 minutes. The official running time reads 73 minutes. The difference is the credits... Well, you need a six-minuter roller to list seven directors. That sure beats *Airplane*'s three and the five unable to rescue the 007 farce, *Casino Royale*, but is nowhere close to the 1930 champion – *Paramount On Parade* had eleven helmers.

TAMARA BOOM TODAY?

Short American person Tamara de Treaux was inside the E.T. suit for a spell. Just for the farewell waddle up the gangplank to his spaceship. Never as long as she tended to make people think she was suited up. No matter. Tammy has finally starred in a movie – hiding nothing of her 25 years and plump 2ft. 11ins. She's one of two magical elves in Charlie Band's *Ghoulies* production. Tammy is Greedguts and another short person, Peter Risch, is her partner, Grizzel. And despite Charlie's in-house SPFXer, John Buechler's ghoulie puppets, Tammy and Pet are the best characters in this 84-minute nip-off of *Gremlins*.



WHOOOPS!

Canada's Rocket Boy space send-up TV series has been cancelled almost before it started. The first five were considered too witty to suit US-TV slots – or buyers. They might be cut together now to be sold off as a tele-movie. The combine making them, Nelvana, is busy enough – making the animated *Ewoks* and *Droids* shows for George Lucas.

SEE IT!

American TV critics don't go to the cinema. Otherwise they'd have realised that their much praised *Starcrossed* tele-flick from Jeffrey Bloom is really a (very) quick re-hash of *Starman*. The tele-btle even

explains the roles have been reversed. For Jeff Bridges' alien read Belinda Bauer. For Karen Allen's earthling read James Spader. Like Spielberg always said, keep your scripts secret or they'll end up as *Movie of the Week*.

SELF-PUBLICIST

Writers, even critics turn director. Not many film publicists, though. I know of one in France, a mate called Jean-Claude Missiaen. He turns out good thrillers and the casting of Grace Jones in the next 007 film is a real steal of his use of Lisette Molitor in *Ronde de nuit* (1983). Now, Roger Corman's ex-Press man, Jim Wynorski, has helmed a sub-standard Sheena Jones venture called *The Lost Empire*. It'll need all his publicity talents...



Daryl Hannah and Tom Hanks set for *Splash II*.

LIGHTS! CAMERA!

Last *Starfighter* maker Nick Castle keeps his head in the clouds for *The Boy Who Could Fly*. ... *Splash* producer Brian Grazer stays wet for *Sea Fairies* and, of course, *Splash II*, with Hannah 'n' Hanks together again. ... Acting in *Riot on 42nd Street* is Kate Collins, daughter of Mike – the Apollo II caddy cruising the moon while Armstrong and Aldrin made giant steps for mankind. ... James Horner scores *Cocoon*, Dave Grusin handles *Goonies* (with care). ... Also on New World's schedule: *Creatures*. You've been warned...

... & AKK-SHUN!

After ILM and THX Sound, Lucasfilm opens another subsidiary: The Droid Works. Tony Daniels and Kenny Baker for chairmen, I say! ... Rocker Wendy O. Williams put *Rocky Horror* on stage in St. Louis, with audiences dressing, making up and joining in the dialogue – just as they've been doing with the film running there since 1978. ... Vincent Price hosts over there's *Mystery* TV series and ex-*Mission Impossible* chief Peter Graves does same for the 20th Century Fox *Mystery Theatre*. ... Ken Russell's original, hotter, unrated version of *Crimes of Passion* is on video release. But *King Kong* (the real one!) is reserved for two video-discs. ... and *Citizen Kane* for three. No buff should be without 'em. ... 2010's John Lithgow narrates *The Amazing Bone* by amazing animator Michael Sporn. ... Nick Rowe has title role of Amblin's first British project, *Young Sherlock Holmes*...

Return To OZ



Walt Disney Films have ventured down the Yellow Brick Road for a special effects-filled adventure in the wonderland of Oz. Alan Jones investigates the technical wizardry that has been employed to produce this magical fantasy.

The Scarecrow has been deposed and is being held captive by the tyrannical Nome King. The Emerald City lies in ruins at the end of the Yellow Brick Road and its former residents have all been turned to stone. The Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion are now just mere statues. Where is little Dorothy now that these familiar characters from the pages of American folk-lore need her most?

The answer lies in *Return to Oz*, the Disney studios' \$25 million sequel of sorts to M.G.M.'s classic 1939 *The Wizard of Oz*. Disney have held the rights to all 13 'Oz' sequels by L. Frank Baum for over 30 years, but their attempts at continuing Dorothy's adventures in Baum's fantasy land – including a musical version planned in 1957 – have all come to nothing for various reasons.

Now, with Oscar winning sound technician turned director, Walter Murch, executive producer Gary Kurtz and producer Paul Maslansky, their long cherished ambition has finally reached fruition.

Ten-year-old Fairuza Balk steps into Judy Garland's immortal ruby red slippers as the Kansas farm girl who is swept into the land of Oz – this time by a spectacular flood. With the help of Billina, a talkative hen, Jack Pumpkinhead and Tik Tok, a helpful robot, Dorothy sets out to oppose the Nome King's regime and the evil Princess Mombi who owns a wardrobe of interchangeable heads and wants Dorothy's to add to her collection. Also starring Nicol Williamson, Piper Laurie, Jean Marsh and Matt Clark, *Return to Oz* began shooting at Elstree studios in February 1984 for a Summer '85 release on five elaborate sets, the most impressive being the vain Mombi's mirrored salon which alone cost \$325,000 and used 8224 square feet of glass.

DIRECTION TO OZ

It was in the Spring of 1980 that Walter Murch found out he was on a shortlist of up and coming talent lying on the desk of Tom Walhite, Disney's production vice-president at the time. "He had been given a brief to infuse Disney with new talent," says Murch, "and when I met him our mutual interest in doing something with the Baum books cropped up in conversation. My earliest childhood memory is of my mother reading me the books. I was virtually raised on them and have made the familiar icons a part of my life ever since as probably most of us have."

Of singular importance to Murch was that the spirit of the Baum books remained intact in his approach to *Return to Oz*. "It was important to leapfrog over the 1939 film and get back to quintessential Baum," he says. "*The Wizard of Oz* interpreted Baum in their own way. What I want to do – what you *have* to do – when shooting an 'Oz' story is to accept their conventions but interpret them more personally. My constant worry is in maintaining the balance between what has been established by our immediate successor but discovering a new interpretation of something inherent in an 80 year-old series of

Opposite, Little Dorothy (Fairuza Balk), a young Kansas farm girl, with two metallic friends – a gallant robot named Tik Tok and The Tin Man.



books. I count myself as a purist and have such strong feelings about the books, so my major concern is that the essence of Ozness is well and truly maintained."

And it is this quality that convinces Murch he is the right man for the job of directing. "I've worked in film from the sound editing and writing point of view, (*American Graffiti*, *The Conversation*, *Apocalypse Now*), so I know the basic ins and outs. But although my experience is from the perspective of seeing people go through the basic directing process, my only real tool is an intuitive conception of the story."

One aspect of the *Oz* production that refuses to phase Murch concerns the special effects area. He says, "At first I was worried about using state-of-the-art animatronics, but then so many of the *Oz* personnel are graduates of the Muppets, *Star Wars* and *The Dark Crystal* that I realised it would be pointless. We are necessarily doing things here that are different from anything else you will have seen, and are trying out combinations never attempted before. But then, that's why I wanted people like Gary Kurtz around me."

PRODUCER OF THE FANTASTIC

Like Walter Murch, Gary Kurtz had always had a vision of being able to do something with Baum's stories. "I had talked to Tom Walhite regarding my interest about a year before I knew Disney planned to go ahead with the project based on one of Walter's early drafts," he says, "and I became involved in one of the script revisions when we tried to analyse the production problems concerning the creatures."

"The creatures in *Oz* are very real characters in the sense that they are not just costumed humans. The special effects were very important to the believability of the story and it became patently obvious that the experience we had built up on *The Dark Crystal* concerning the technology was undisputedly going to be the best way to do it. I personally thought that it was better to have the creatures appear as creatures that come to life as characters of the film rather than rely on the vaudeville style of an actor in a suit. I love *The Wizard of Oz* - it's one of my favourite films - but at the time it was made it was an extension of the enormously successful stage show version and the vaudeville tradition that goes along with it."

And Kurtz feels that it wouldn't have been possible to take that approach anyway. As he comments, "This story is not a musical. It would have been impossible to compete with the Garland vehicle on that level and not a good idea to try as it has a special niche in Hollywood history. This adventure is more in the tradition of the Baum books and we purposely wanted to make this film as different from *The Wizard of Oz* as possible. The books are good action adventures in their own right. They certainly don't need a musical treatment to tell the story because if you accept them at face value, everything that happens, happens within the context of the reality you are creating. I would hope that the best praise reserved for *Oz* will be audiences not caring or trying to figure out how something has been achieved."

CLAY CREATURES

With the spectacular array of creatures populating the land of *Oz* and lines in the script that say: 'Mombi goes to one cabinet and takes off her head, walks headless to another, takes out a replacement and puts it on', it becomes quite clear that a high calibre special effects make-up crew were needed to breathe life into Baum's creations. Gary Kurtz thinks that one of the *Oz* showstoppers will be Will Vinton's Claymation sequences. Kurtz explains, "This is the first time the process has been used



Above: Jean Marsh behind bars as *The Wicked Witch*. Below: *The Tin Men* strikes. Right: *The heroes of Oz: (l-r) The Cowardly Lion, The Tin Men, Dorothy, The Scarecrow, Jack Pumpkinhead (with Billina the chicken) and Tik Tok*





in a feature film for non-humorous purposes. The Nome King and his messengers are very sinister bad guys in the story and Vinton is not using clay as such but a special material that looks more like rock. This way faces can grow and retreat logically".

Vinton, who won an Oscar for his short film *Closed Mondays*, feels he has transformed a very unsophisticated technique into a highly sophisticated one and in his studio in Portland, Oregon has been building 12 inch to lifesize replicas of Nicol Williamson for the more demanding transformations. As the Nome King gains ever increasing power over Dorothy and her friends, he evolves from inside a rock becoming progressively more human as he appears on the surface. Everyone is hopeful that the transition from the animated rock creature to actor Williamson will be as subtle as possible so nobody will notice.

Another special effects pioneer at work at Elstree is Zoran Perisic, the man who made *Superman* fly. His job is to make Dorothy's fall through a rock mass as lifelike as possible. To this end he is using an endoscopic medical camera and a French loaf of bread as the texture of both is remarkably alike. Perisic is also responsible for all the back projected, split screen and travelling matte sequences involving the headless Princess Mombi.

Make-up supervisor Robin Grantham found his work on *Oz* to be a combination of conventional make-up tasks mixed with highly innovative and experimental ones. Grantham, whose most recent credits have included *Never Say Never Again* and *An American Werewolf in London*, admits that the most intricate make-up was for Nicol Williamson's Nome King. "What was unique

about this," he says, "was that this one character had to be created in conjunction with more than the normal partners of make-up, like hair and wardrobe. We had to work closely with the art department and the Claymation specialists as well."

According to Grantham, there are five stages in all for the transformation of the Nome King from stone to human form. "The first three were Claymation," he says. "The last two, live action. The trick was to put the audience off guard as to when the change takes place. It was particularly complicated. For example, in the third stage the eyes are very real looking but he is not in fact real. In the first human stage he looks very rock-like but he is real flesh underneath. We were mainly blurring the edges with prosthetics and it took three-and-a-half hours to cover Nicol at his most rock-like." The scale of *Oz* and the long distance Claymation connection has made this the biggest undertaking of Grantham's career.

MECHANISED MAGIC

Handling the mechanical effects for *Oz* is supervisor Ian Wingrove who has under his belt *The Dark Crystal* and *Return of the Jedi*. One of the industry's most experienced specialists, Wingrove turned down other work to make sure he was available for *Oz*. "Everybody in their right mind would want to do this picture," explains Wingrove. "I wanted to involve myself in a little cinematic magic and film history. I hung on to get on *Oz* and now I'm glad I did. We've had our ups and downs – but what else is new?"

Wingrove's major problem with *Oz* was getting The Gump to fly. The Gump is the contraption that catapults Dorothy, Tik Tok and Jack Pumpkinhead out of one of Mombi's tower windows and is made up of two Victorian sofas roped together with a moose head strapped to the front, a broom for a tail and palm leaves as wings. In all, four different models were needed for each separate flying movement.

"For the take-off from Mombi's castle," explains Wingrove, "we constructed a captive rail system along the lines of a big dipper. The palm wings had to be mechanised for this shot and we needed different types for each action. Some had to be stiffer than others for the various degrees of flexibility otherwise the beating movement would cancel itself out. Engineering the wings into the main base caused problematical torque difficulties as three wings all eight feet long needed a lot of strength to move them.

"The couch also had to be able to fly on wires. Eventually we are going to have the couches on hydro-

Another headache is actually getting Dorothy into the land of *Oz* according to Wingrove. "We had to build an actual river on Stage Five to simulate the flood that carries Dorothy along in a chicken coop. That Stage does come equipped with a long narrow tank but producing a fast flowing river in such a small area is a real problem. Submersible pumps produced the flow but we also had to control the coop by hydraulic wire rigs to make it bob up and down in the water. Obviously we are pumping water past the coop a lot faster than it was moving so we had to make sure we could hold that position."

When *Oz* reached the final stages of pre-production, with Walter Murch excising 20 pages of script to reduce the cost, Wingrove found that one of the major effects sequences he had been working on for seven weeks had been scrapped. "There was this lovely sequence of the characters rowing across a desert in a boat. It was very amusing and I was asked to achieve it without any wires, rails, tracks or cables. Eventually we constructed a rig that consisted of an upside down conveyor belt on



Below: Our heroes with the moose-headed 'Gump'. Top right: The Oz men. (l-r) director Walter Murch, executive producer Gary Kagle, producer Paul Maslansky. Middle right: The Wicked Witch! Bottom right: A regal portrait of The Scarecrow.

raulic simulators against a blue screen and the characters will also be flown against this on what we call pole-up lines in order to do the necessary twists and tumbles.

"Making the Gumps took five months. As we have never put this amount of weight at the end of a pole-line before. We wanted a nice slow action for the wings as we wanted them to look natural and curl like a bird's. We experimented with different types of fibreglass to get this action."

Operating the Gump may be the major part of Wingrove's role on *Oz* but it certainly isn't the sum total of all he has to do on such a heavy mechanical laden movie as this proved to be. "We are dealing here with a lot of big stage areas having to rock and shake," says Wingrove expanding on this theory. "I don't think this has ever been done to this degree and size before. Instead of the old trick of shaking the camera, Walter wanted this done for real. So we had to build all these enormous hydraulic rigs which tilt and vibrate".

caterpillar treads without any external power supply so it could operate on its own. It was made so that as they rowed it could change its speed. I was very pleased with the challenge and the solution and it was a shame that it had to be cut out."

Wingrove wishes he had been involved on the character side of production and doesn't particularly warm to the fact that mechanical effects and puppetry are now categorised as two different departments. As he says, "Years ago before any of this was fashionable everybody did everything. Now there's this new department called animatronics caused by the very nature of certain films. Nature will run its course though and the rift will mature as it will return to an area where more linking up is essential. We should have more involvement and in some ways I get upset over this craze for special effects because it really isn't anything new. We've all been doing it for years although the more sophisticated an audience gets, the harder my job becomes."

THE PUPPET PEOPLE

Lyle Conway, the Creature Design Supervisor, pioneered the development of major animatronic characters for *The Dark Crystal* which in terms of cable and radio controlled puppetry were landmarks. His most remarkable achievement in *Oz* is Billina, the talkative hen. It is a perfect life-size replica of a chicken complete with remote control units and more than 100 moving parts in the head alone. Explains Conway, "Making the chicken look real was the hardest problem of all and I couldn't have achieved that if Val Jones hadn't come up with a special stretch fabric for the chicken's neck. A chicken's head is only the size of a walnut so you can imagine the nightmare of packing in the circuitry and making it reliable. I'm not too sure about duplicating reality in this way but I'm more than happy with the end result as we couldn't get the real chickens to do enough stuff. They were born to be food, not actresses."

With seven different versions of Billina to contend with to accommodate the various angles needed, Conway comments, "The chickens didn't last long as they tend to get very ragged looking so we had to have numerous back ups. The trouble is that people know what a chicken looks like and how it ought to move, so we couldn't make any mistakes."

Conway was also responsible for the rotund robot Tik Tok which caused some painful problems for its operator, Michael Sundin. "Walter wanted to stick as closely as possible to the Baum books," explains Conway, "but the original illustrations were not drawn with animatronics in mind. Tik Tok had to be changed because as written it would have been impossible to duplicate—and operate—the skinny little legs. Michael was bent double inside the robot's stomach with his head between his legs viewing the outside world upside down on a television monitor. He also had to walk backwards to get Tik Tok to move forwards and he wasn't allowed in the costume for more than ten minutes at a time."

Walter Murch also wanted Conway to stick as much as possible to the original conception of Jack Pumpkinhead, "That was difficult too," says Conway. He continues, "Originally we had all these locations planned, so the puppet had to be one you could perform outside without any additional riggings. Walter didn't want the eyes or mouth to move either, so any expression had to be achieved by moving the shoulder."

In all there are three different models of Jack Pumpkinhead, says Conway. "One is a costume version with an actor in a suit shot so fast that you won't notice the thicker neck than usual. The second is a puppet version worked from below and the third is a flying version that will be tied into some stop-motion animation."

The cut in budget didn't affect Conway's department in any way whatsoever according to him. "We had made most of the puppets in the pre-production time so it was only a case of putting the finishing touches on when the main shooting started. We decided very early on to go in for basic easy mechanics, although strangely enough there is nothing here that needed putting your hand into. Everything was done either by mechanics or a costumed performer."

With over a year of his life taken up with the making of *Oz*, Conway shares the belief, as everyone involved with the production does, that the film is predominantly about personalities and not special effects. As he explains, "I would like to think that the effects enhance the characterisations rather than overwhelm them. I think audiences will remember the story rather than a specific effects sequence. *Oz* will be about people and very real characters with their roots in accessible fantasy—not just a couple of rubber dummies and a little kid!" ♦



— STARBURST — FILM REVIEWS

LADYHAWKE

"An uncontroversial fairy tale for young children"

Although Richard Donner has directed successful films like *The Omen* and *Superman*, his new fantasy film *Ladyhawke*—about a mythological romantic love affair which has been eternally cursed by an evil bishop, borders on the crude approach to what Hollywood regards as 'History'. Supposedly a medieval period piece, *Ladyhawke's* score—composed and conducted by Andrew Powell resembles incongruous modern day rock music, thus undermining the film's claim to authenticity from the beginning. And although the picture is well lit by Vittorio Storaro, *Ladyhawke's* premise of a medieval myth comes across as old fashioned, especially after the fairly recent glut of medieval period pictures like the superior *Excalibur*.

Rutger Hauer and Michelle Pfeiffer play the doomed lovers—respectively Etienne Navarre, the nobleman knight and Isabeau of Anjou, whose face has been described as the "face of love". Their desperate and seemingly futile quest for release from their curse is reluctantly aided by a cutpurse—"Phillipe the Mouse" (Matthew Broderick) whose claim to fame is he is the only person to have escaped from the notorious dungeons of Aquila, an amazing feat we witness during the film's opening scenes.

Matthew Broderick, so good in *WarGames*, does not excel under Richard Donner's exaggerated direction. Affecting an English accent, his performance as the fast-talking, supposedly engaging and witty young rogue who lives on his wits, is not only over the top (in his acting) but is also undecidably unfunny when wisecracking. Which is a pity, as he has the largest part in the film, with the charismatic Rutger Hauer and Michelle Pfeiffer trailing behind in their secondary roles as the romantic heroes.

Broderick's role is necessarily large, as the uninspired and unim-



Top: Broderick and the bird (Kes style). Left: Knight hawks: Rutger Hauer and feathered friend. Above: Michelle Pfeiffer as the hooded hawke lady.

aginative script (Edward Khmara, Michael Thomas and Tom Mankiewicz) calls for him to guide and look after the lovers as they make their way to Aquila so that Etienne can wreak revenge on his and Isabeau's persecutor, the bishop (John Wood). And this is what helps make the film mundane, for most of the action centres on a monologue talking Broderick who leads the lovers, in their human and beast forms, through the manufactured medieval countryside and villages of an alleged France. (*Ladyhawke* was shot in Italy as according to Richard Donner—"We needed crumbling castles and medieval ruins, and there seems to be more of them, in more suitable condition, in Italy than anywhere else".)

The bishop's ingenious curse, con-

sisting of Etienne turning into a wolf by night, and Isabeau turning into a hawk by day, so only for a split second, at sunrise and sunset, could they almost touch is a fascinating theme in itself. But the weakest point of *Ladyhawke* is the transition scenes when the human lovers metamorphose into dumb beasts. John Richardson, the special effects supervisor has done away with special effects altogether, and has substituted soft focus imagery during the so-called transition scenes!

Donner, in his own words strove for a "blend of mysticism and reality", but there is no mysticism in *Ladyhawke*, largely due to the lack of effects.

The climax of *Ladyhawke* comes when Etienne and the bishop swordfight on the bishop's home-turf of the

Cathedral of Aquila, but the script's unfeasibility has the bishop's court looking upon the action, without one of them prepared to come to their superior's aid.

Richard Donner has made *Ladyhawke* an uncontroversial fairy tale for young children, as the film's blandness and stereotyped performances from actors like Leo McKern as an eccentric friar offers nothing interesting, let alone new.

Frances Lynn

Starring: Matthew Broderick (Phillipe), Rutger Hauer (Navarre), Michelle Pfeiffer (Isabeau), Leo McKern (Imperiuss), John Wood (Bishop). Directed by Richard Donner, Produced by Richard Donner and Lauren Shuler. Screenplay by Edward Khmara, Michael Thomas and Tom Mankiewicz. Story by Edward Khmara.

BODY DOUBLE

"De Palma's legion of fans will lap this up"

A new film by Brian De Palma is always an event in my book. Since *Blood Sisters* I've been a devoted admirer of this director's work and *Body Double* only confirms my adulation. Prior to seeing it, I had been told that it was his worst offering to date and categorically, a bad movie. If that is indeed the case – I can't see it at all. I loved *Body Double* for the same reasons I've loved all his other films: fluid, breath-taking camera work, glossy, sensual imagery, a gorgeous Pino Donaggio score and the satisfying feeling that an assured master manipulator has you eating out of his hand yet again.

What most people seem to be disappointed by in *Body Double* is that the mystery – who is doing what to whom and why – is the least important part of De Palma's artifice in this instance. As with *Blood Sisters*, *Body Double* is about voyeurism in its purest and most perverted form, and the trouble it can cause for innocent bystanders. Constantly De Palma forces the audience to lesciviously share the peeping tom antics permeating the scenario. None more so than a brilliant sequence set in a high class L.A. shopping precinct where we react to what is going on behind the curtains in an underwear shop's changing room. This scene has a lot in common with the art gallery sequence in *Dressed to Kill* and the comparisons don't stop there either as De Palma got the basic idea for *Body Double* from Angie Dickinson's shower scene where she had a stand-in for all the nude shots.

Craig Wasson plays Jake Scully in *Body Double*. He loses his job on a schlocky 'low-budget vampire flick and on the same day catches his wife in bed with another man. So he jumps at the chance of resting in a spectacular Hollywood Hills house offered by another aspiring actor. One of the perks of being so high up, he is knowingly told, is that he can gaze through a telescope and watch one of the glamorous neighbours go through a nightly sexually titillating ritual. Jake watches, of course, and becomes obsessed by the rich Hollywood wife, Gloria Ravelle (Deborah Shelton) enough to start following her around town. Then one night he witnesses her near strangulation by a sinister Red Indian and arrives at her home too late to save her from being brutally murdered. Distraught, and the prime suspect in the homicide as far as the police are concerned, he tries to take his mind off the disturbing chain of events and tunes in to an adult cable channel on television. There he sees a trailer for a porno movie called *Holly Does Hollywood*. The star is Holly Body, (Melanie Griffith), and her actions precisely mirror those he has watched Gloria go through during her nightly routine. Fired with disquieting curiosity, Jake decides to investigate and starts unearthing some strange facts when he enters the sleazy world of the hardcore movie industry.

Watching De Palma plagiarise himself plagiarising Hitchcock makes interesting viewing. Themes and motifs from all his earlier movies – bar none – are easily recognisable, (e.g. Wasson's claustrophobia induced camera whirling seduction of Shelton), as well as direct nods to *Rear Window* and *Vertigo*. De Palma has been accused of wholesale stealing from the Master, but as he so

rightly states, films are a canvas of visual images and good ideas are good ideas whatever source they are borrowed from.

Bloodletting is at a minimum in *Body Double*. The drill murder is certainly galvanising but tastefully done, exploiting more what you think you see than what is actually shown. Shock value mainly comes from the depiction of a world very rarely seen in mainstream cinema – the 'sexploitation' one – with dialogue to match. But De Palma's ace here is having Melanie Griffith as such a knowing innocent abroad that the effect is more of mild amusement than prurient interest. And only a brilliant director like De Palma can squeeze every ounce of eroticism from the soft-porn shown and sidestep the blatant misogyny.

Apart from Frankie Goes To Hollywood making a brief and unwelcome intrusion into *Body Double*, I make no apologies for what some may regard as a totally biased review blinded by my affection for De Palma's visions. He is one of my favourite directors and accordingly I react emotionally to his work.

Somewhat I doubt whether *Body Double* will win De Palma many converts. But his legion of fans will almost certainly lap this up. And remember – you can't believe everything you see!

Alan Jones

Starring: Craig Wasson (*Jake*), Melanie Griffith (*Holly*), Greg Henry (*Sam*), Deborah Shelton (*Gloria*). Produced and Directed by Brian De Palma. Screenplay by Robert J. Avrech and Brian De Palma. Story by Brian De Palma.



Above: Deborah Shelton and Craig Wasson. Two innocent victims in Brian De Palma's *Body Double*.

THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN INVINCIBLE

"A very funny film"

This could be the new cult fantasy to follow in the footsteps of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. It certainly deserves to be. *The Return of Captain Invincible* manages to fly that thin line between sophisticated satire and camp comedy, an area in which many recent cult contenders have nose-dived (*Liquid Sky* and *The Big Meat Eater* to name two recent disappointments).

Philippe Mora proves his worth at directing comedy, which bodes well for the quality of his up-coming sequel to *The Howling*. Made in 1981, *Captain Invincible* is a parody of many big budget superhero films; *Superman* obviously, as well as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in an hilarious scene featuring an army of vacuum-cleaner 'snakes'.

After four forties' style newsreel examples of *Captain Invincible*'s heroic exploits fighting gangster bootleggers and Nazi bombers we witness the 'legend in leotard' accused of fascist behaviour (not to mention flying without a license and wearing underwear in public!) by an American court. Totally disgusted, the demoralised Captain emigrates to Australia to become a drunken bum.

Thirty years later, the Australian government has a problem: someone has stolen their secret Hypnotray weapon. The visiting American President suggests that what the world needs now, in this moment of crisis, is a hero. Send for his old friend *Captain Invincible* – the Man of Magnet!

With the help of a Sydney police woman called Patty they manage to locate the washed-up Captain, and he begrudgingly agrees to help. Our hero realises his old adversary, the dark and sinister Mr Midnight, is behind the disappearance of the Hypnotray in his mad scheme to rid New York of its immigrant population. Soon they must face each other in a final battle of wits...

Alan Arkin gives an intense performance as 'Vince', the has-been

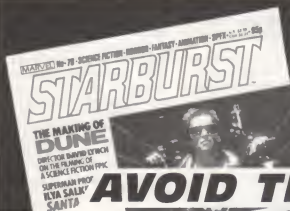
hero, and Christopher Lee is wonderful as he parodies his villainous screen image. Both actors also succeed in delivering their many songs with great gusto and feeling.

The film's music varies in style from gospel, country-and-western, through to rock 'n' roll. The songs feature some absurdly clever lyrics; for example, one Richard O'Brien/Richard Hartley composition contains the outrageous line; "If you don't name your poison, then I'll have to get the boys in!"

Yes, *The Return of Captain Invincible* is a very funny film. A classic cult comedy, perhaps.

Roger Birchall

Starring: Alan Arkin (*Captain Invincible*), Christopher Lee (*Mr Midnight*), Kate Fitzpatrick (*Patty*). Directed by Philippe Mora.



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MAX HEADROOM

"A specially effective
movie"

"Meet Max Headroom", they said. The computer generated television announcer destined to be the new media star of Channel 4, whose features are the future of TV presenters to come. However, they were quick to apologise that Max is just off the computerised drawing board and isn't quite perfected yet. He stutters and stammers, gets words mixed up and sometimes suffers from a visual twitch that is quite (eye) catching.

But will you believe that computers can replace flesh and blood people that we know and love. So once you get used to the slightly strange, shiny plastic quality of his deeply tanned face, the plasticine hairdo, and his non-reflective reacto-light-rapide eyes, you won't be able to tell him from the real thing.

What is all this about you might ask – but then again you should already know, as the regular half-hourly *Max Headroom* shows are well underway, and the hour-long origin pilot was screened at the start of April (for all of you who saw the film and are still confused, you can catch it again at the end of the 13 programme run).

For those who would like reminding, the film is set 20 minutes into the future, where TV is the only growth industry. It tunes into the machinations of the world's top television station – NETWORK 23 – run by Mr Grossman, played by Nicholas Grace, and their top rated TV programme. The programme – a high powered, investigative news show – has been made a success through the agency of ace reporter, Edison Carter (Matt Frewer), who is aided in his electronic news gathering forays via a computer link with his controller, Theora Jones (Amanda Pays).

The visuals in this sequence are an overlap between video verité and computer graphics, which left me wondering if we were entering a new generation of TV/computer watchers who are capable of receiving multiple levels of information like this. But don't worry it is by no means essential to the plot...

Thanks to computer whiz kid Bryce Lynch (Paul Spurrier), NETWORK 23 have invented the blipvert – a TV commercial compressed into a fraction of a second, which is over before the viewer can even think of changing channels. These blipverts have,



Top: TTTT Talk about Talking Heads. Max Headroom, the computer generated video jockey. Above: Bryce Lynch (Paul Spurrier), not in as much control as he thinks.

however, one unfortunate side effect on the slothful viewer... it causes them to explode. Edison gets hold of the story and is determined to expose his own employers.

However, before he can do this, he has to evade a futuristic Burke and Hare – Breughel and Mahler (Hilton McRae and George Rossi) – and escape from the computer controlled citadel of NETWORK 23, which, despite Theora's attempts is being manipulated by Bryce. It seems as if Edison is going to get away as he steals a motor bike and speeds through the underground car park. Then at the last moment Bryce loses a barrier, with Maximum Headroom only 2.6m. Edison is knocked unconscious.

Now the dilemma for Mr Grossman is that Edison knows too much,

but he is also one of the top rated presenters – lose him and farewell ratings. The solution offered by Bryce is to generate a computer image of Edison, that will be controlled by another computer programme based on an analysis of his brain. However, the programme is only powerful enough to create an image of the head and the result is Max, who can't quite get the idea of Max (imum) Headroom off his mind, and who also knows enough to expose NETWORK 23. Grossman tells Bryce to get rid of them both, who in turn engages Breughel and Mahler to do the job.

Breughel and Mahler try to make a little extra on the side and sell off Edison's body to the Body Banks, entrusting the computerised Max to Blank Reg (Morgan Shepherd) and

Dominique (Hilary Tindall) at Big Time TV, a pirate station broadcasting from the back of a truck. They plug the set in and out comes Max, with a fully made personality, and a greater sense of humour than Edison seemed to display. Max is then used as the host on a 24-hour rock/pop video show, which steadily climbs in the ratings, leaving Edison to fight his way out of the body banks and expose Grossman's part in the blipvert scandal.

So why is it, if the *Max Headroom* Show is just another way of re-packaging rock/pop videos, we had to go through the above? It seems the need for a rational, no matter how far fetched, explanation haunts us, even in the fantasy world.

As for the weekly show, the mode of presentation is in the form of a minimal link man, allowing the promotional videos to run, on the whole, uninterrupted. I much prefer the snappy stand-up comic approach to many of the ingratiating pop presenters who try to be the focus of the programme instead of acting as introducers. As a way of packaging rock/pop videos, this minimalist approach can't fail.

The hour-long pilot film and the half-hour regular shows are directed by Rocky Morton and Anabel Jankel. The film's imagery projects a post-electronic revolution world, where the computer has fallen into decline and disrepair. A world where a kick and a thump has entered the manual of every user friendly system. To this end the locations used are excellent, conveying a sort of lived in desolation.

Max Headroom's story is set in the decayed post-punk world so popular with many rock/pop videos, ala Billy Idol's *Dancing With Myself* (directed by Tobe Texas Chain Saw Massacre Hooper). This is combined with some perennial SF clichés in an amusing mish mash of styles from *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, to *Blade Runner*, to *Mad Max*, to camp horror and (consciously or not) to comics, particularly Howard Chaykin's (well and truly) mixed media *American Flagg!* (published by First Comics).

Max Headroom benefits from being a low budget TV film, as any extravagance might have only led to a special effects movie. Rather what we have is a specially effective movie.

Richard Ashford

Starring: Matt Frewer (*Max Headroom* and *Edison Carter*), Amanda Pays (*Theora Jones*), Nicholas Grace (*Mr Grossman*). Directed by Anabel Jankel and Rocky Morton. Produced by Peter Wagg. Written by Steve Roberts.

The Great British Animators

JOHN HALAS

*In the field of British and international animation John Halas is a prime mover. His forty plus years in the industry have seen him at the forefront of many achievements in animation. From his early work on commercial advertisements, and training and propaganda films during WWII, through his excellent adaptation of George Orwell's classic *Animal Farm*, to his production of the first computer generated animation feature – the apocalyptic *Dilemma* – John Halas has successfully continued to stretch the possibilities of animation and his forthcoming *Great Masters* project shows that he's not willing to 'call it a day' yet. In this, the first of a series of articles looking at the work of British animators, John Halas spoke to Richard Holliss about Disney, Da Vinci and the dilemma of animation for adults.*



ASIFA (The International Animated Film Association), appreciates this importance and has made 1985 the *Year of Animation*. Its President, and Chairman of ASIFA's Research and Development commission, John Halas, feels the time is right to introduce this neglected art to a wider audience. "We are, at least, as big as the live action industry, but no one knows about it." In order to prove that what he says is not just speculation, Halas has prepared some staggering statistics on the state of world animation.

"Global turnover is as much as \$596 million, which in turn is broken into several categories including cinema and television entertainment, animated feature films and shorts. In the United States of America, Japan and Western Europe, advertising is the biggest of these markets. The Americans spend some \$250 million on advertising, whilst Japan spends up to \$40 million and Western Europe \$12 mil-

lion. Although in the field of computer graphics, Western Europe spends a modest \$15 million, Japan and America between them, spend up to \$175 million. In total the United States has a \$425 million turnover in all these specialised markets. Together with Japan's outlay of \$44 million and Western Europe's \$27 million, the full world market accounts for well over half a billion dollars."

With such vast sums of money now being spent, Halas is convinced that the industry is desperately in need of wider audience acceptance, and sees this year's celebration as a unique opportunity to doing something about it. "ASIFA membership has grown from 7 to over 54 nations. We aim to boost the annual turnover to \$1 billion by the end of 1985. Animation isn't recognised beyond its present contribution to the children's entertainment market. I fully believe it is one of the most vital art mediums of our time.

Animation is very much a growth industry that still fails to be recognised in modern cinema. Yet the process of instilling movement into a series of cleverly constructed drawings has been a part of our way of life for almost a hundred years. Ever since Emile Reynaud first experimented with his *Theatre of the Projected Praxinoscope* in 1877, man has been fascinated by the idea of making pictures move. Other important names in those early pioneering days include Thomas Alva Edison, J. Stuart Blackton, Winsor McCay and Earl Hurd.

All those mammoth feature films such as 2001: A Space Odyssey, Star Wars and Return of the Jedi, could not have been achieved without the aid of stop-motion techniques and computerised animation graphics."

John Halas is a quiet unassuming man with a gentle sense of humour. He speaks with a strong Hungarian accent and there is nothing about the art of animation that he doesn't know. Born in Budapest in 1912, he was educated at the Academy of Arts in Budapest, and the Institut de Beaux Arts in Paris. In 1940 he founded and was creative Director of Halas and Batchelor Animation until he branched out on his own in 1981. He was awarded an OBE in 1972 and is an Honorary Fellow of the British Kinematograph, Sound and Television Society. His total output over forty years has included 2,200 films, 300 of which he personally directed. And yet he still maintains that he never reached a stage whereby he was entirely satisfied with the work.

"I think the potential is always better than the fulfilment. It's so rich a media, it's like a pool, you can never reach all the sides at once." John Halas produced Europe's first 3D film, *The Owl and the Pussycat*, in 1953. Together with Joy Batchelor he made *Animal Farm* in 1954 - Europe's first full length animated cartoon feature and a milestone in British cinema - which required some 250,000 drawings and some 1,800 coloured backgrounds. In fact the list of achievements is endless. In 1957 he made the only Cinerama animated film, *Cinerama Holiday*, the long-running television series *Foo-foo*, and the hilarious *Tales of Hoffnung*. There have also been countless advertisements and educational films, including *Ruddigore*, based on the opera by Gilbert and Sullivan and the first of its type, and more recently *Autobahn* (1979) with music by Kraftwerk. *Autobahn* adapted and combined video computer and hand drawn animation techniques for video disc use. In 1981, Halas produced *Dilemma*, the world's first fully computer generated film, which went on to win numerous awards at international film festivals (it was released on the same programme as *Return of the Jedi*). In 1982 *Players* was awarded seven international prizes and *Doctor in the Sky* (1983) was produced in conjunction with the United Nations for the Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights.

The one thing of which Halas is particularly proud, is his opportunity of introducing young animators to the industry. "I'm not only a maker of animation, but a maker of animators as well", he smiles. A recent issue of the *Arts Review* magazine listed a group of graphic artists who all began their careers at Halas and Batchelor. Of course he is well aware of the failures as well as the successes. He felt, for instance, that the feature length *Heavy Metal* film, a segment of which his studio were re-



Opposite page: The man behind the pen John Halas. Top: Pigs, power and paperwork from *Animal Farm* (1954). Middle: Automobiles Amok! From the Halas and Batchelor short *Automania 2000* (1963). Bottom: Cut and paint! Evolutionary antics from *History of the Cinema*.

sponsible, was a big disappointment. The fact that ASIFA is so successful is due to the combining of world talents in a harmonious atmosphere. Something that a film such as *Heavy Metal* failed to achieve.

Another important aspect of the *Year of Animation* is the competition open to young animators between the ages of 16 and 25, who are invited to produce their own animated short, by whatever method

they prefer. Prize money will total £6,500.

"I have invited an international jury from New York, Japan, France, Italy and Holland, to select the best films. Run in conjunction with the BBC means that a special one hour documentary will be screened in August featuring each of the winning entries".

Also in conjunction with the BBC, Halas is compiling a 13-part series featur-

ing the best animation from around the world. "Arrangements are now under way with other nations for permission to show the programmes. With the exception of the medical profession, I can think of no other situation where there is such a good co-operation between East and West," he adds. "In the USSR, less than five percent of their animation output has political ends. The other 95 percent is freedom of choice. Whereas we may use 15 copies of an animated short for cinema distribution, they will print up to 1,200 copies. They accept the media a little better than we do."

Of his rivals, John Halas greatly admires other British animators such as Bob Godfrey. However, he has strong feelings about the legacy left by the Disney organisation. "We are still paying a bitter price for Disney's success. His stamp on the animation industry was so hard to beat, and his exploits so popular that we are still suffering from it." Halas also feels that this 'Disneyfication' of the industry has prevented other studios from utilising different styles of animation. Whatever the concern over Disney's influence on the medium, Halas is the first to admit that to succeed you do need three major disci-

plines. "Firstly you have to be more brilliant than anyone else. Secondly you have to have a lucrative market. Thirdly you need the factory behind it. Animation needs a continuous output to achieve the first and second disciplines."

Leaving his former 'factory' to work on his own, Halas has found one of his greatest rewards is the opportunity to continue working in different areas of animation. "There is no particular system that I prefer. I usually depend on content. At the moment I'm compiling a one hour project on the life and work of Leonardo Da Vinci. This is the second of twenty, one-hour specials on the lives of the great masters. The beginning of the film (approximately two minutes), when I concentrate on giving a bird's eye view of the subject areas he touches, I use 100 percent digital animation. Then follows a series of photographs showing where he lived and where he was born. These are supplemented with a series of animated illustrations of his youth, his life in Florence and his education. There will be cel animation of some of these achievements and computer animation to explain Da Vinci's experiments in biology and botany. Then

will follow a large section dealing with his paintings, not only the *Mona Lisa*, but many others. These we will show as they are. I don't want to tamper with that, I can't improve. Then finally, when I relate his work with such supernatural fantasy as *Shakespeare's Tempest*, there will be a little piece of computer graphics. The ringing of the bells in the world's cathedrals when he dies will be cel animation again."

John Halas looks on this *Great Masters* project as his life's work. He has no other plans for the future except to tour the world for his *Year of Animation*, with invitations to take part in over seventy international engagements, and he hopes to speak at the *National Film Theatre*, in a follow up to his very successful 1982 *Guardian Lecture*. With the promised re-release of the excellent *Animal Farm* to a whole new generation of film goers, John Halas looks set to be around the busy world of animation for some considerable time to come.

Opposite Page: Scenes from the life and times of the mad inventor himself, Leonardo Da Vinci. John Halas' second animated biography in his *Great Masters* project.

Index of Halas and Batchelor Productions

1940-1949

Train Trouble (8 mins).
Carnival in the Clothes Cupboard (5 mins).
Filling the Gap (8 mins).
Dustbin Parade (9 mins).
Digging for Victory (2 mins).
Jungle Warfare (8 mins).
Handling Ships (70 mins).
Modern Guide To Health (8 mins).
Old Wives Tales (8 mins).
Charley (7 episodes - 10 mins each).
First Line of Defence (8 mins).
This is the Airforce (8 mins).
What's Cooking (2 mins).
Dolly put the Kettle on (2 mins).
Oxo Parade (2 mins).
Magic Canvas (10 mins).
Play for Fire Fighting (60 mins).
Heave Away My Johnny (10 mins).
The Shoemaker and the Hatter (16 mins).
Submarine Control (30 mins).
Fly About the House (11 mins).

1950-1959

As Old as the Hills (10 mins).
Earth in Labour (2 mins).
Moving Spirit (18 mins).
Poet and Painter (4 programmes - 6-10 mins).
Animal Farm (74 mins).
We've Come a Long Way (10 mins).
The Owl and the Pussycat (stereoscopic - 7 mins).
Linear Accelerator (20 mins).
Power to Fly (19 mins).
The Figurehead (9 mins).

Down a Long Way (18 mins).
The Sea (10 mins).
Animal Vegetable Mineral (11 mins).
Popeye (7 episodes - 10 mins each).
The World of Little Ig (8 mins).
The Candlemaker (13 mins).
To Your Health (16 mins).
History of the Cinema (10 mins).
Midsummer Nightmare (8 mins).
The First 99 (10 mins).
The Christmas Visitor (9 mins).
Dam the Delta (16 mins).
Speed the Plough (16 mins).
Early Days of Communication (10 mins).
How To be a Hostess (20 mins).
Man in Silence (8 mins).
All Lit up (6 mins).
Piping Hot (6 mins).
Energy Picture (16 mins).
For Better for Worse (12 mins).

1960-1969

Foo-Foo (33 episodes - 6 mins each).
Habatales (6 episodes - 7 mins each).
The Monster of Highgate Pond (live action - 61 mins).
Snip and Snap (26 episodes - 6 mins each).
History of Invention (11 mins).
Wonder of Wool (16 mins).
Guns of Havarone (excerpts - 4 mins).
Hamilton the Musical Elephant (10 mins).
Hamilton in the Music Festival (10 mins).
8mm Concept Films. Biology (17 episodes); *Science* (6 episodes); *Maths* (4 episodes).
Barnaby-Father Dear Father (5 mins).
Barnaby-Overdue Dues Blues (11 mins).
The Showing up of Larry the Lamb

Automania 2000 (10 mins).
The Axe and the Lamp (9 mins).
The Tale of the Magician (12 mins).
Ruddigore (55 mins).
Paying Bay.
Follow That Car.
The Tales of Hoffnung (7 episodes - 8 mins each).
The Carters of Greenwood (12 episodes - 4 mins each).
Martian in Moscow (12 episodes - 4 mins each).
Evolution of Life (8 episodes - 12 mins each).
Do Do (72 episodes - 5 mins each).
Les Aventures De La Famille Carre (12 episodes - 4 mins each).
Icegrad Congress (live action - 6 mins).
Classic Fairy Tales (6 episodes - 6 mins each).
Matrices (10 mins).
Dying for a Smoke.
Deadlock (5 mins).
Flow Diagram (4 mins).
Linear Programming (11 mins).
Lone Ranger (37 episodes - 7 mins).
The Question (8 mins).
What is a computer (18 mins).
Girls Growing Up (8 mins).
Mothers and Fathers (8 mins).
Colombo Plan (10 mins).
The Commonwealth (10 mins).
Bolly (5 mins).
Functions and Relations (10 mins).
Measure of Man (10 mins).
To Our Children's Children's Children (8 mins).
Short Tall Story (5 mins).

1970-1979

The Five (6 mins).

Wot Dot (6 mins).

Flurina (11 mins).

Tomfoolery (17 episodes – 24 mins each).

This Love Thing

Children and Cars (12 mins).

Football Freaks (8 mins).

The Condition of Man (6 episodes – 10 mins each).

The Addams Family (17 episodes – 22 mins each).

The Jackson Five (17 episodes – 22 mins each).

The Osmonds (17 episodes – 22 mins each).

Children Making Cartoons (live action – 23 mins).

Britain Now (3 episodes live action – 24 mins each).

Contact (17 mins).

Making Music Together (9 mins).

Kitchen Think (10 mins).

The Ass and the Stick (12 mins).

Christmas Feast (12 mins).

The Glorious Musketeers (70 mins).

The Twelve Tasks of Asterix (last reel – 82 mins).

Carry On Milkmaids (8 mins).

Butterfly Ball (4 mins).

How Not To Succeed in Business (9 mins).

Life Insurance Training Film (excerpts – 28 mins).

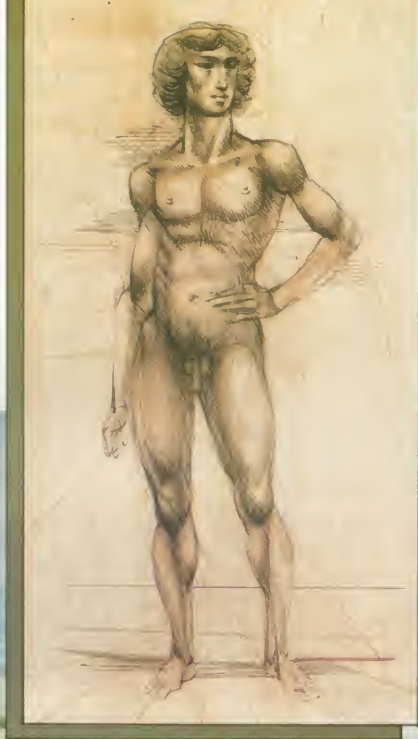
Max and Moritz (82 mins).

Skyrider (8 mins).

Making it Move (live action – 10 mins).

Noah's Ark (15 mins).

Wilhelm Busch Album (13 episodes – 3 mins each).



While Hollywood continues to investigate the possibilities of cinematic fantasy via increasing technical wizardry, John Carpenter's *Starman* comes as a refreshingly romantic change of pace.

Starman relates the story of an alien observer (Jeff Bridges) who comes to

STAR



Left: Amidst a special effects 'light show' *Starman* (Jeff Bridges) says goodbye to Jenny Hayden (Karen Allen). Below: The stars pose 'Blue Lagoon' style. Far right: Jenny is left alone after the *Starman* is picked up by his mothership

earth and assumes the guise of a human. The body he chooses to clone is that of the recently deceased husband of Jenny Hayden (Karen Allen). After much convincing, Hayden finally, and a little fearfully at first, agrees to drive the alien across the country to rendezvous with his mothership. At this point the tale takes on the aspect of a rather strange 'road movie'—a voyage of discovery—as the alien learns what it is to be human, and in the process the two fall in love.

However, not all goes smoothly, as Government agents, who have been on the trail of the alien since his spaceship crashed, track down the couple and attempt to prevent the alien's return. . .

The above synopsis would no doubt make the most lenient critic cringe



STARMAN



with undisguised embarrassment, and there's little denying Starman's simplistic plot. Yet much of the story's strength comes from John Carpenter's decision to eschew overblown special effects in favour of characterisation, and focus on a touchingly eccentric relationship.

The pivotal character of the Starman, and the credibility of the film's premise, rests on the shoulders of Jeff Bridges. An acclaimed actor, nominated for two previous Academy Awards, Bridges gained a further nomination for his captivating performance as an alien adapting to his brief human existence. In this interview with Anna Crystal, he talks about life as a star and a Starman.



Three-time Academy Award nominee Jeff Bridges, who plays the alien in Columbia Pictures' *Starman*, considers this role one of his most unique challenges. "When I first read the script, I knew I wanted to play the role. It was an incredible opportunity to play a person from outer space. It's challenging because there's nothing to base the characterisation on. If you were going to play Babe Ruth, you could do research. But for this role, there's absolutely no frame of reference." ➡



His role as the alien in *Starman* was quite a departure from his most recent film, *Against All Odds*, in which Bridges played a down-and-out football player involved in a dangerous love triangle. Bridges has since shed his tough outer shell presented in that film, for a more innocent look for *Starman*.

Bridges was not only attracted to the script for *Starman*, but also the opportunity to work with director John Carpenter. "The chance to work with John was a big plus. I felt that the script really needed a director who was compatible with the project, and John was a perfect choice,

"I felt that the script really needed a director who was compatible with the project, and John (Carpenter) was a perfect choice. . ."

mainly because I admired his body of work. I've loved the films of his I've seen. And most importantly, I had a feeling that he would do a wonderful job with this film."

In dealing with his character, Bridges relied not only on his own studies, which involved working with dancer Russell Clark to create the awkward mannerisms the part demanded, but on the expertise of



*Top: Karen Allen plays the recently widowed Jenny Hayden who falls in love with a *Starman*. Above: Director John Carpenter.*

director Carpenter. "I think one of the most important things between an actor and his director is respect for each other. I'm grateful that that's what existed between John and myself to the extent that we could take each other's suggestions. I really relied on his insights into my character and his willingness, and enthusiasm, about my perceptions of the role. He helped me to transcend my own natural character and become someone entirely different."

The ability to portray different characters and live life through someone else's skin is one of the things that Bridges considers most interesting about acting. But then, acting is the family business for Jeff Bridges. Big brother Beau has a long list of credits in motion pictures and television, and Bridges' first acting experience came at the age of eight on father Lloyd's long-running television series *Sea Hunt*.

"It was an incredible opportunity to play a person from outer space. It's challenging because there's nothing to base the characterisation on."

Bridges actually made his motion picture debut in 1950, when he was four months old, in *The Company She*

Keeps, which starred Jane Greer, Elizabeth Scott and Dennis O'Keefe.

Born in Los Angeles, Bridges attended University High School, then journeyed east to study acting at the Berghoff Studios in New York City. In 1969 Bridges made his feature film debut in *Halls of Anger*. His next film, *The Yin and Yang of Mr. Go*, written and directed by Burgess Meredith, was shot on location in Hong Kong. Following that, Bridges appeared in Peter Bogdanovich's *The Last Picture Show*, with a role as a small-town Texas tough that earned him an Academy Award nomination.

In 1974, Bridges received a second Oscar nomination for his role opposite Clint Eastwood in *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot*, Michael Cimino's directorial debut.

Among his starring roles are the 1976 remake of *King Kong*, *Somebody Killed Her Husband*, *Winter Kills*, *Cutter's Way* and *Kiss Me Goodbye*. He was also one of the principals in *Heaven's Gate* and played the young computer-game jockey in *Tron*. Bridges will next star with Glenn Close in the courtroom drama *The Jagged Edge*.

A romantic-adventure, *Starman* is a most unique love story. Says Bridges, "There are things in *Starman* that are totally unusual and



Above: Government agent Mark Shermin (Charles Martin Smith) roots through *Starman*'s record collection. **Below:** "Help! I'm being kidnapped by a man from outer space!"

probably have never been seen before. A love affair between an alien and an earthling, now that's quite rare."

"After the Oscars I feel my father is proud at last! He kept saying how

proud he was that I had been nominated. Hollywood's such a strange place, it's important to feel the support of your family. I'm really lucky there!"

Bridges has been lucky all round, and we'll be seeing him in another SF film this year. A sequel to *Starman*?

Bridges smiles. "I'm not giving anything away. Not until it's finalised."

Something tells me we haven't seen the last of *Starman*. ♦



DANGER MAN



Before *The Prisoner* there was *Danger Man*. A key figure in the popularity of both programmes was their star, Patrick McGeehan. Jon Abbott looks back at the taut and tough TV exploits of John Drake, *Danger Man*—Patrick McGeehan's secret agent apprenticeship for *The Prisoner*.

Like most of the surviving U.K. television series of the past, *Danger Man* was originally made to make money in the all-important U.S. market. In those early days no-one was remotely interested in "television history", and certainly not the small amount of "old TV" that was being accumulated. Many TV shows, including classic episodes of *Hancock's Half-Hour* and *Doctor Who* amongst many others, were 'wiped', and new programmes recorded over them. Consequently, those series that survive today are mostly the filmed ones made for the U.S. syndication market.

The pioneer of television exports was undoubtedly Lew Grade, the man best known to fantasy buffs for putting up the money for Gerry Anderson's legendary puppet series. Grade worked from ATV in the midlands, and formed the Independent Television Corporation (ITC) in 1960, after the success of a number of half-hour adventure shows, sold abroad mainly as cheap time-fillers.

Having fixed his sights on the big three networks in the states, ABC, NBC and CBS, which was where the money was, he specialised in imitations of U.S. formats during the sixties even though, ironically, he began by also exploiting the American envy of Britain's colourful history as well.

The first U.K. series made for syndication was *Robin Hood* in 1955. This was not only plundered mythology for folk heroes for British youngsters, but had the dual benefit of exploiting American interest in British history. This was followed in 1955 with *The Buccaneers*, starring Robert Shaw, and *Sir Lancelot*, with William Russell (later *Doctor Who*'s first companion, teacher Ian Chesterton). However, *William Tell* (with Conrad Phillips) and *Charlie Chan* (with J. Carroll Naish) did not do as

well. By this time, the Americans were exploiting their own folk heroes in similarly rose-tinted fashion, and just about every potential adventurer from *Superman* to *Kit Carson* was being featured in TV adventures. Grade was not deterred though; as late as 1963, *Richard The Lionheart* was in production, with Dermot Walsh as King Richard, a 'hero' surely on par with America's 1967 *Legend Of Custer!*

In 1957, producer Ralph Smart came up with *The Invisible Man*, a show complete with an anonymous actor in a heavy coat that rather obviously covered his head as well as his body! These were the early days of TV though, and both British and American audiences were impressed. On the strength of this, Smart and Grade came up with *Danger Man*, which made its U.S. debut in 1961. . . and sunk without trace. Retitled *Secret Agent* (although still known as *Danger Man* in the U.K.), the show was extended to an hour-length format, given a new springy theme (by Edwin Astley, who wrote the music scores for most of Grade's sixties adventure shows) . . . and took off.

Watching *Danger Man* today is rather like looking at the performance of a middle-aged athlete or elderly dancer – you have to understand the age factor and respect them for what they achieved in their day, rather than judging them by present standards of sophistication. In its day, *Danger Man* was classy, top-notch entertainment, rather superior to many contemporary series. The plots were new and original, the obvious resolutions were twist endings, and the stilted dialogue was delivered by good actors. The production values were good for the period, even though today TV techniques have progressed so far as to make the show display its age rather obviously. Yet still its virtues – McGooohan's strong, understated performance, the shadowy, moody camerawork, the lack of story padding, the absence of silliness, if not contrivance – shine through. The show may not belong in the category of timeless television, but it deserves its place in the archives as the best of its kind.

SPY VS SPY

Danger Man had the good fortune to debut in America shortly before the film debut of James Bond in *Doctor No* and the subsequent spy craze that was to follow, with a surfeit of such spy dramas as *I Spy*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Wild, Wild West*, *Amos Burke – Secret Agent*, *Honey West*, and many others. Although the first series of half-hour episodes came and went in its intended American market without causing much of a ripple, by the time the revamped 60-minute version hit U.S. screens in the summer of 1965,

the public were ready for the adventures of British Intelligence agent John Drake, as played by actor Patrick McGooohan.

McGooohan was a very straight-laced, direct and opinionated man, with strong views on television, politics and morality. Unlike James Bond and *UNCLE* agent Napoleon Solo, the character of John Drake had little time for women – McGooohan had insisted that a bedroom scene early in the series was written out, and none had appeared subsequently. Whereas the *James Bond* films were hopelessly sexist, and the *UNCLE* films, while not exactly offensive, indulged in the sixties sexual attitudes of the day toward women as an attractive diversion, both *Danger Man* and McGooohan's follow-up series, the legendary *The Prisoner*,

me". Crooked officials, defiant women, ruthless terrorists and cowardly double-agents all withered and fell at his steady gaze, staccato dialogue and right hook.

Many of the guest-stars in *Danger Man* were actors McGooohan had worked with in his previous film career; Patrick Wymark, Laurence Naismith, William Wyvester, Raymond Huntley, Duncan Lamont, and others. Other guest stars included Robert Shaw (*The Buccaneers*), Dermot Walsh (*Richard the Lionheart*), Wendy Craig (before her sit-com fame), Jean Marsh (*Upstairs, Downstairs*), Honor Blackman (*The Avengers* and *Goldfinger*), Lois Maxwell (Miss Moneybags in the *Bond* films and the voice of Lt. Atlanta in *Stingray*), and Alan Wheatley (well-known for many years as the villainous



might almost have been considered misogynist. In both series, women were either not to be trusted, menial appendages to the men, or both! Drake was no womaniser, and McGooohan allowed no sexual overtones in either series. Neither would Drake carry a gun considering them "ugly, oily things", although he did acquire a number of *Bond*-like gadgets during the later days of the series. His two clenched-fists solved most of his problems.

Each week, Drake would turn up in one foreign country or another, often in disguise, put right an international situation or diplomatic incident in thirty minutes, and disappear at the end of it. It was never quite made clear who he was working for – the opening narration referred to "a dirty job", and someone's got to do it – "that's when they call on me . . . or someone like

Sheriff Of Nottingham in *Robin Hood*). Some, such as George Coularis, Darren Nesbitt and others, would later turn up in *The Prisoner*. Other guest stars turned up more than once; Donald Pleasance, Hammer film veteran Michael Ripper, and the then-unknown Warren Mitchell (TV's Alf Garnett) all appeared twice in the half-hour series. One amusing characteristic of the series is now-familiar faces, such as Mitchell, Ripper and John Woodvine turning up playing foreigners with names like Miguel, Abdul, and Luigi, or whatever, which didn't help credibility at all!

More recent repeats also brought other problems with credibility which were a little more bizarre than the inevitable ancient music score or unsophisticated back projection techniques. In the episode *An Affair Of State*,

► we see the late John Le Mesurier, who would become one of the most familiar faces on television in the years to follow, shoot a man before the opening credits. For the rest of the episode, we hear only his distinctive voice as he sits before Drake with his back to the camera, only to be later revealed, to the accompaniment of a crescendo of dramatic music, as the murderer. Unfortunately by this stage, most viewers were already well aware that McGoochan had been conversing with Le Mesurier throughout the episode, despite the obscured features, because of his now instantly recognisable voice... then unknown. Little wonder that McGoochan himself sometimes seemed to forget where he came from; in some episodes he speaks with his recognisable accent, while in others – no doubt for the benefit of the all-important American market – he had been instructed to adopt a sort of trans-Atlantic bogus American. Perhaps all those disguises and episodes filmed out of sequence were getting to him.

THE MCGOOCHAN MOULD

Although his status was virtually mercenary-for-hire in the first series of 39 half-hour episodes (although he often seems to be working for NATO or

Mi 5), the following hour-long series of 45 episodes (only two filmed in colour) defined him as an agent for British Intelligence. Unlike other agents, he rarely worked with a partner, even temporarily; John Drake was strictly a loner, and this lack of background or character development served only to increase his image as a defiant, professional and single-minded loner, a persona that undoubtedly helped with *The Prisoner*.



"I wanted Drake to be in the heroic mould" McGoochan said at the time of the series, "like the classic western... which meant he had to be a good man. I see Drake as a man of high ideals, with a passionate belief in the dignity of mankind. He is a man who has done a lot of jobs in his time. He doesn't come from a well-off family. He had to struggle for an education. But he is not a

thick-ear specialist, a puppet muscleman. There is action, plenty of it, but no brutal violence. When Drake fights, he fights clean. He prefers to use his wits.

"I'm the first to admit I've done some rubbish in my career" he continued, "I enjoy playing the role, although when it was first put to me a few years ago I was a little worried about doing it. It's very difficult to maintain a high standard of production on a TV series. But I believe that most of the episodes have been quite good. Of course there have been the odd one or two that make me squirm when I think about them, but I've been extremely happy with the majority. An actor is rarely satisfied with his own work, and I'm terribly self-critical. I can't stand incompetence, and I hate having to sit through rubbish, whether it's on the cinema, or TV screen, or on stage. Teamwork is so obviously very important in a series, and we do have a marvellous team".

Channel 4 is presently showing the series out of sequence, although with *Danger Man*, unlike many series, it hardly matters. The show was shot out of sequence, with each episode taking fourteen days to film, a very slow pace by today's standards. Even then, most of the location work was done before the studio scenes. There were no continuing sub-plots or co-stars.

Although of Irish descent, McGoochan was born in America in

MEET... THE UNCANNY

X-MEN



NEIN, KAMERADEN – NOT US! WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM BEHIND US...

S'RIGHT, NIGHTCRAWLER, AN' AH RECKON EVERY X-MEN FAN IN THE COUNTRY WOULD LIKE TO SAY HOWDIE TO WRITER CHRIS CLAREMONT, ARTISTS JOHN ROMITA JR. AN' DAN GREEN AN' EDITOR ANN NOCENTI.

DA, TOVARISCH – AND NOW IS THE TIME TO MEET THEM – BECAUSE ALL FOUR ARE IN GREAT BRITAIN!

BETTER BELIEVE IT, BUB! SHOOT THE BREEZE WITH CHRIS CLAREMONT AND ANN NOCENTI AT LONDON'S FORBIDDEN PLANET BOOK SHOP BETWEEN TWO AND FOUR ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 22ND.

JOHN ROMITA JR. AND DAN GREEN WILL BE AT THE SAME PLACE BETWEEN TWO-THIRTY AND FOUR-THIRTY ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 25TH – YOU GOT ALL THAT...?

I THINK THEY UNDERSTAND, STORM. THE ONLY OTHER THING THEY NEED TO KNOW IS THAT FORBIDDEN PLANET IS AT 23, DENMARK STREET, LONDON W1

IT SHOULD BE A FASCINATING MEETING OF MINDS. I ONLY WISH I COULD BE THERE MYSELF...





1928. His parents moved from New York back to Ireland when he was a child, and later moved to Sheffield, where, fresh from college, McGoochan became – after a succession of unrelated, menial jobs – assistant stage manager of a local repertory company. On the strength of his appearance in the stage version of *Moby Dick* for Orson Welles, he appeared in the film *Passage Home*, another stormy ships-at-sea epic in 1955. Produced by later *Avengers* producer Julian Wintle, and directed by Roy Baker, it was a minor role that led to a contract with Rank. A co-starring part followed. In a similar seabound Wintle film for Rank, *High Tide At Noon*, but this time he was third in the cast. His next appearance, in the 1957 film *Hell Drivers*, teamed McGoochan with another sixties 'super-spy' Sean Connery, and also co-starred William Hartnell, the first and best, *Doctor Who*. In the years that followed, McGoochan worked with Joseph Losey (*The Gypsy And The Gentleman*, 1957), starred in the thriller *All Night Long* in 1961, the social drama *Life For Ruth* and *The Quare Fellow* in 1962, the Disney adventure film *Doctor Syn* in 1962, and, again for Disney, *The Three Lives Of Thomasina*, with Susan Hampshire.

Two films for MGM followed the demise of *Danger Man*. The filming of *Ice Station Zebra* in 1968 with John Sturgess necessitated a longer break than anticipated during the filming of *The Prisoner*, which was when ITC pulled the plug on the proposed 26 episodes of this surreal follow-up to the John Drake saga (although McGoochan couldn't use the name of Drake, as the character belonged to Ralph Smart). In the meantime, producer David Tomblin, who had, like many of the crew on *The Prisoner*, worked with him on *Danger Man*, was faced with turning out three episodes without the Portmerion location (first discovered by McGoochan while doing location work on *The Paper Chase*, an early episode of *Danger Man*) and one – *Do Not Forsake Me ...* – without McGoochan! The result was some of the most inventive and imaginative television ever produced, but McGoochan was fast losing favour with the men holding the purse strings, and who had given McGoochan a free hand on the strength of the success of *Danger Man*. When McGoochan returned, he and Tomblin – with friends and sympathetic allies Leo McKern and Alexis Kanner – wrapped up the series on orders from above with the celebrated and

notorious *Fall Out*. Thus ended McGoochan's association with the people originally behind the *Danger Man* series.

Since then McGoochan has starred in a succession of big screen ventures, and like Robert Vaughn, another sixties super-spy, has found himself predominantly cast as an icy villain. Also like Vaughn, he has little trouble in finding acting work when it suits him, although he's done very little on television, having as little need for the security of TV as TV has had from him. *The Prisoner* may have been a cult show and an artistic success, but it was a major disappointment for ITV and the money men, who wanted, and expected, another *Danger Man*. Certainly *The Prisoner* caused a rapid fall from grace after the phenomenal success of *Danger Man* on the international market, but for McGoochan, and the viewers, *Danger Man* served its purpose. It was an entertaining series in its day, and it gave him the money and the clout to make *The Prisoner*, the series he wanted to make. And while *Danger Man* has despite McGoochan's powerful performance, not aged particularly well, it stands, with *The Prisoner*, as a television landmark, a symbol of its period rather than a shadow of it. ♦

VIDEO FILE

Reviews by Barry Forshaw

How does this sound for the plot of a SF horror movie? A group of astronauts investigating an organic-looking alien artefact are decimated by a shape-shifting creature until only one remains. Well, it was good enough for *Alien* – and Roger Corman, having given it another run-through in *Forbidden World*, has decided it'll stand up one more time (reasoning, no doubt, that as O'Bannon and Scott borrowed their plot from *It! The Terror From Beyond Space*, they're fair game for being ripped off themselves).

Actually, as *Alien* clones go, *Galaxy Of Terror* (a new Warner release) is surprisingly diverting. Director B.D. Clark has provided several imaginatively grisly deaths for the crew of his starship, and the film occasionally conveys a genuine sense of wonder. Details such as a glowing, triangular doorway with inter-dimensional properties reminded me of Arthur C. Clarke's creation of an alien environment in his book *Rendezvous With Rama*. And I liked the sequence in which a crew member, locked in a mortal struggle with his own doppelganger, reaches for a boot-knife that isn't there – only to see it produced, smilingly, by his double from his boot.

Special effects are very ambitious (considering the shoestring budget) and if only a little more care had been devoted to characterising the protagonists, a striking effort might have resulted. As it is, we watch their various glutinous demises with virtually no involvement. Nevertheless – this one is worth your time.

FURRY FIENDS

Another new release from Warners had me wondering why certain themes continue to inspire filmmakers despite the almost inevitably disastrous movies that result. If I say to you: "Killer Bees", you'll no doubt think of the string of ghastly movies that directors have wrung from this seemingly intractable theme. And if I say to you: "Giant Rats", you'll probably quail at the memory of the ludicrous combination of glove puppet and shaky back-projection of real rats trotted out in everything from *Dr. Who* to the recent *Nightmares*.

Well, *Of Unknown Origin* (directed by George P. Cosmatos) is another outing of the giant rat variety. And while Cosmatos initially keeps his



Above: It's knight-time for Warner Home Video, with the release of the sword and sorcery fable, *Hearts and Armour*.

monster largely hidden, certain moments have a genuine jolt – as when the hero, Peter Weller, unzipping his fly, opens a lavatory seat (any male viewer is likely to wince at the resulting shock). And the central character's conflict is effectively built up to almost epic proportions (although the invoking – via TV screen – of Hemingway's similar one-to-one conflict in *The Old Man And The Sea* isn't a wise idea).

But as the malignant rodent is seen more frequently towards the climax, the Muppet-like manipulation of the beastie becomes embarrassingly apparent. Still, there are some cleverly shot suspense sequences (including a final confrontation in which the beleaguered hero, attired à la Ghostbusters, virtually demolishes his home with a nail-spiked baseball bat.) Whether or not you should rent the video depends on your attitude to giant rat movies.

LAST YEAR'S SLEEPER

Thorn EMI's track record at snapping up the genre movies we all want to see continues blazingly with Joe Ruben's *Dreamscape*, an intelligent and witty science fiction adventure graced with a really excellent cast.

Taking as its starting point *Fantastic Voyage*'s journey into a human bloodstream, *Dreamscape* posits a

telepathic "trip" by the hero (Dennis Quaid) into the dreams of another human being – dreams that he can alter by his presence. This involves helping a disturbed boy vanquish the monstrous "snakeman" of his nightmares (one of the best dream sequences, with some splendid Craig Reardon prosthetic effects). Quaid also enters a lumberingly unfunny dream of marital infidelity, and then, most effectively, becomes a participant in a death struggle in the dreams of the President of the U.S.A. (played by Eddie Albert).

This last sequence, set in the nuclear-devastated world of the President's nightmares, prompted the Monthly Film Bulletin to describe the film as part of the new "nuclear pornography" (films like *The Day After* and *Testament* being evoked). But it's long been a hallowed tradition for SF to use nuclear war and its aftermath as an element in its scenarios, and here, the film can bear the weight of its monstrous setting. The mutilated nuclear victims function as part of the thriller narrative and as a telling reminder of what all presidents (East and West) should be having nightmares about.

SPAGHETTI FANTASY

Certain video companies should be carefully watched by all admirers of

genre cineam, and they're not necessarily the "big guns" either. Medusa Video, for instance, has several intriguing items amongst its more conventional fare – and as this prelude may suggest, it's time for another Starburst video company overview!

Italian genre cinema is the source of much of Medusa's more exotic items, and those who follow the films of Lucio Fulci, Umberto Lenzi and Lamberto Bava should definitely keep a weather eye on their releases.

A striking example of the Italian musclemen cycle is Carlo Campogalliani's *Goliath And The Barbarians* which pits the wondrous physique of Steve Reeves against blood-bolted barbarian hordes. Those of you whose misspent youths were spent perusing the pages of *Famous Monsters Of Filmland* may remember a bizarre still of Reeves' torso with the head of a snarling beast. Such moments of peplum poetry are studded throughout Campogalliani's epic, which was re-scored by Les Baxter for the American release, with a truly breathtaking soundtrack.

An intriguing SF movie of American origin from Medusa is Mike Corey's *WaveLength*, an ambitious attempt to deal intelligently with an alien encounter that bristles with several literary SF ideas rather than the cowboys 'n' indians in space concepts that clutter the genre. And science fiction is tackled by zombi-

master Lucio Fulci in *Rome 2033* in a stylish switch from his usual orgies of disintegrating cadavers. Although *Rome 2033* uses the matrix of previously successful movies (such as *Mad Max*'s brutal futuristic visions), it goes without saying that Fulci is not content with cloning other directors' successes. And if the effect of his gladiatorial saga is not as striking as it might have been, Fulci fans should still investigate.

Less interesting is Jules Harris's *Exterminators Of The Year 2,000*, where more of *Mad Max*'s progeny destroy each other in a workmanlike but conveyor-belt effort. Some evidence that clones can add something to the original is Umberto Lenzi's *Ironmaster* (a low-budget massive success for Medusa), where the rough-edged energy of the movie's

barbarian hero tapped the comic-book *Conan* more than the philosophical overlay of Milius's adaptation.

MORE FROM MEDUSA

I've previously covered the bizarre *Screamtime*, an Amicus-style anthology written by Michael Armstrong (always a figure to watch in the horror genre). Certainly the first episode, with a demonic Punch and Judy man, successfully touches the same shiversome chords as the classic Ealing *Dead of Night* (the Cavalcanti 'ventriloquist's dummy' episode).

In the tough thriller vein, Martin Herbert's *Blazing Magnum* has some bristling action sequences, in particular a spectacular (if unlikely) car

chase that at times has the nail-biting excitement of *Robbery*, *Bullitt* and *The French Connection*. As the title might suggest, the film owes more than a little to the *Dirty Harry* series, but detective Stuart Whitman's spectacular laying waste of public property and endangering innocent bystanders goes without a single warning from his superiors, and it's Harry Callaghan's insubordination that's a major element in his appeal. Still, this one will keep you watching, and there's an excellent supporting cast in Martin Landau, Gayle Hunnicutt, John Saxon and the star of many Italian genre movies, Tisa Farrow (Mia's sister).

Back with action-orientated science fiction, *The Atlantis Interceptors* is largely successful at mining well-explored veins (here *Assault On Pre-*

cinct 13, although *Mad Max II* gets a look in). Characters as one-dimensional as ever, but there are some lively battle scenes, including spectacular leaps from helicopters to moving vehicles.

More news of Medusa releases next month.

BRIEF NOTICES

Now, we all know that William Shatner couldn't commit murder, let alone behave like the gibbering psychotic he portrays in *Impulse* (Mega). So this creakingly amateurish effort loses what little credibility it may have had. Actually, in a better film, Shatner would be more than good enough an actor to convince us that he wasn't the liberal captain of the USS Enterprise. Anyone who remembers his stunning portrayal of a Machiavellian racist in Corman's *The Intruder* will know what I mean.

The Power (EIV) is a movie directed by Jeff Obrow and Stephen Carpenter (of *Pranks* fame) and not to be confused with the excellent sixties George Pal movie. The pleasure to be had here is all from the splendid make-up effects (by Matthew Mungle), with the hokey plot about a malevolent idol exerting sinister influence being far less interesting than the pleasingly staged distortions of the human body. The effects here belie the modest budget.

The appearance of a really bad movie on video is a less frequent occurrence (thankfully) than it was when every company was scouring its vaults for any junk that could be seductively repackaged. But *The Demons* (EG) shows that the truly appalling stuff is still around. This is a conflation of *Witchfinder General* and *The Devils* that does no service to the memory of either movie. You won't believe it, but the nuns in this movie wear both lipstick and false eyelashes, even before their demonic possession!

Somehow, *Psycho* looks as fresh as ever, however often one sees it, despite the monthly rip-offs that continue to appear. Will the same be true of *Mad Max II* in years to come? Watching yet another clone in *Stryker* (Thorn EMI), directed by Cirio H. Santiago, I wondered if we're now all thoroughly tired of customised cars and leather-clad punk characters.



NEW AND FORTH-COMING

Warners lead with the sword and sorcery offering *Hearts 'And Armour*, supported by the Corman production *Monster* (AKA, *Humanoids From The Deep*). From R.C.A., a re-issue of the *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* Special Edition. Polygram has the Rosemary's Baby style *Stranger Within*. CBS/FOX has *The Devils Gift* and Freddie Francis' excellent E.C. anthology *Tales From The Crypt* in a double bill with Roy Ward Baker's less successful follow up, *Vault Of Horror*. They also boast the gripping *Terminal Choice*. And if you want to see the matrix for C3PO (i.e. the original 'tin man'), MGM-UA have re-issued the original *Wizard Of Oz*.

Top: A tense moment for Richard Dreyfuss as Roy Neary in this scene from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (R.C.A. re-issue). Above: Terror on the beach as *Monster* strikes (Warner Home Video).



The Official Comic Book Adaptation



Are comics strips simply films on paper? Can something of the experience of watching 2001: A Space Odyssey, Star Wars or Alien be translated onto the printed page? Dick Hanson recalls his first encounter with the curious "Official Comic Book Adaptation", and looks at the spate of subsequent endeavours.

In the thirties and forties a generation of young dreamers in America embarked on their first interstellar journeys every Saturday morning in the relative comfort of their local movie houses. Every young boy's imagination thrilled to the adventures of his favourite heroes: Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon and Superman.



They all knew that the space ships were made out of cardboard, and that if you looked hard enough you could see the strings that made them fly, but what did that matter? A whole universe lay before them, even if it was only a hand-painted canvas backdrop.

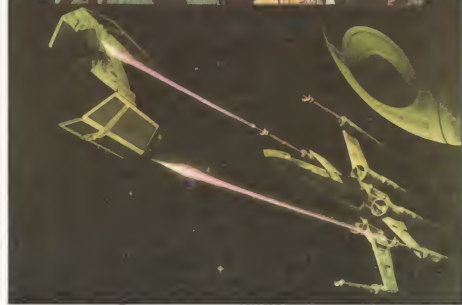
Yet even if the movies couldn't get it quite right, there was always another place these dreamers could go where fantasy reigned supreme -- the comic books! Artists like Alex Raymond, and later Wally Wood and Al Williamson, armed only with pen and paper, created the alien worlds and fabulous galaxies which every young dreamer knew existed just beyond the furthest star.

Come the fifties and sixties, there was one man in particular whose prolific pencil spawned a whole cosmos of fantastic creations and dazzling futuristic technology -- Jack Kirby. The young dreamers called him "King", and his visionary imagination gave birth to Attilan -- the hidden refuge of the Inhumans, Ego the Living Planet, a gold-skinned innocent known only as Him, and a noble comic wanderer called the Silver Surfer. Together with writer Stan Lee, his *Fantastic Four* and *Thor* comics were unrivalled in excitement and epic scope.

However, truth being, as they say, stranger than fiction, the ever-accelerating technological advances of day-to-day life in the sixties began to outstrip the brain-children of Jack Kirby. By the end of the decade the moon had come within man's grasp, and the science fiction film went into a decline. Who wanted to see toy space rockets now that you could turn on your television sets and see a man actually walking in space?

Yet in 1968 -- just one year before Apollo 11 touched down -- the space ship made a reappearance on the wide screen in Stanley Kubrick's landmark 2001: A Space Odyssey. These craft were as far removed from Flash Gordon's trusty rocket as an E-type Jaguar was from a Matchbox model. Majestic and massive, they wheeled gracefully through space to the strains of Strauss's music -- no papier-mâché and canvas here. These space ships were real! Five years work and over \$10 million went into the making of the first big-budget SF film, and it created a phenomenal impact on its audience. 2001 became an instant cult and later an

Far left: Scenes from the excellent Alien -- The Illustrated Story. Top: 2001: A Kubrick Odyssey -- grace and enigma. Left: 2001: Kirby Odyssey -- dynamism and clarification.



all-time cinema classic, but there was no follow up, and SF cinema continued to have a distinctly minority appeal.

During this period the comic books were also undergoing some significant changes. Jack Kirby had parted company with Marvel Comics, and the superhero boom of the sixties was on the wane. In an attempt to counter the superhero slump, Marvel Comics turned their eyes towards other subject matter that might appeal to their readership. The early seventies saw the rise of horror fantasy comics, a genre which had been in hiding since the anti-horror comics purge of the fifties. Dracula, Frankenstein and Werewolf all appeared in the Marvel Universe, alongside Spider-Man and Daredevil. Oh yes, and despite a rather shaky start, a barbarian named Conan went on to become one of the most popular titles of the decade. At the same time Marvel began investigating another source of story material, which promised to bring a guaranteed readership with it – the movies.

ENTER THE MOVIE MARVELS

A version of *The Golden Voyage Of Sinbad* appeared in the final two issues of *Worlds Unknown* (June/August 1974), drawn by veteran artist George Tuska. This was Marvel's first attempt at adapting a motion picture into comics format and was somewhat less than successful. However, immediately following its demise, Marvel launched a new title in their line of black and white magazines, based on the successful movie series *Planet Of The Apes* (which was at that time being developed as a major TV show). Each issue contained articles, interviews, a new comic strip based on the concepts of the *Apes* series, and comics adaptations of the films themselves. Gold Key had already produced a one-off version of *Beneath The Planet Of The Apes* back in 1970, but Marvel had obtained the rights to adapt the whole series, each film being translated into six 20 page episodes.

The first adaptation featured *Planet Of The Apes* and George Tuska was again the artist, with writer Doug Moench being responsible for turning Rod Serling's original screenplay into a comics script. However, contractual requirements were to have an adverse effect on the final result. Twentieth Century Fox did not give permission for likenesses of Charlton Heston and the other actors to be used, so the artwork bore little resemblance to the film itself. The number of words which could be used per page was also restricted, as Twentieth Century Fox felt that too many words would infringe the rights of the publishers of the novelised version of the screenplay. These limitations resulted in a fairly perfunctory comic strip, which was little more than an illustrated version of the film's dialogue, failing to catch the drama and excitement of the movie. The magazine lasted for only 29 issues, and during its course ran adaptations of the other four *Apes* films, which suffered from the same problems as the first.

Marvel's next major attempt at converting a film into a comic came in 1976. After several years sabbatical, Jack Kirby returned to the fold as writer/artist/editor on a number of projects, including an adaptation of the science fiction hit 2001: A Space Odyssey.

And yet... some nagging doubts lingered. Ever since the demise of his "Fourth World" series at DC Comics, Kirby seemed to have lost a lot of his magic. He initiated a number of intriguing titles, such as *Kamandi* and *The Demon*, but did not seem to be able to sustain his interest in them for more than a few issues. His artwork started to look like self-parody, and his writing



(never his strongest point) degenerated into aimless plotting, redundant, over-written captions and over-blown dialogue. Would his return to Marvel and the inspiration of Kubrick's movie be able to reverse the sad decline of one of the great comics artists?

Happily, the answer seemed to be yes! His tabloid sized, 70 page 2001: A Space Odyssey, Marvel Treasury Special in my opinion ranks with his best work on Thor or The New Gods. The layouts are dynamic, each of the characters is strongly defined, the writing is always pertinent and not overloaded with unnecessary text, and some of the futuristic hardware and comic panoramas are quite simply breathtaking. The book is a fine example of Kirby at his creative peak. But as an adaptation of 2001? Well, that's a slightly different question.

It is the visuals of Kubrick's film that make it so striking. There is no dialogue for almost the first half hour, and similarly the magnificent final sequences are entirely wordless. The episodes in which speech has an important function are almost incidental to the film's meaning. Kubrick communicates his vision of man's odyssey most effectively through the fusion of image and music, and at certain moments through image and silence. Many of the audience were left confused at the film's enigmatic finale, and Kubrick does not force a traditional plot on the viewer. The presence of the giant black slab is never explained, and the metamorphosis of Dave Bowman is left tantalisingly in the realm of the irrational. We have to draw our own conclusions and come up with a personal interpretation of what we see.

No such doubts exist in Kirby's version. We are told at the beginning that "The man-apes have taken their first step toward . . . Humanity", and the concluding pages categorically state "The Monolith completes the job it began millions of years ago . . . Another great step has been taken in the 'Odyssey of Man'". Much of the film's impact comes from what is left unsaid, and such explicit interpretation of the action simplifies the original and actually diminishes its effect.

Another problem that arises is the style of Kirby's drawing. The movie dwells at length upon the beauty and grace of the massive space ships as they circle in the void, and its slow and dignified pace sets it apart from typical space rocket adventures. Kirby's artwork, however, is the essence of dynamism: characters burst off the page with raw energy, and his universe is a frenetic explosion of bright stars and whirling supernovae.

I don't mean to denigrate Kirby's work, but there are many passages in the film which simply go beyond the scope of four-colour newspaper reproduction. The comics version is successful, but only if one does not view it as an adaptation of the movie. Where it scores is as an interpretation of the film: one master of his

Far left: Al Williamson's beautiful rendering for Return of the Jedi, in contrast with the 'super real' screen treatment. Top and below: Frame by frame, scenes from Blade Runner – The Movie, and Blade Runner – The Official Comic Book Adaptation.





medium bringing his unique skills to bear on an independent creation, which draws its inspiration from the work of a master of a different medium. *2001: The Ultimate Illustrated Adventure* is a magnificent achievement in its own right and a tribute to Kubrick's extraordinary film.

Logan's Run was the next movie project that Marvel undertook: this again co-incided with a TV series based on the film. The plan was to adapt the film over the first four issues of a regular monthly colour comic and then to continue the storyline with original scripts. Although as a film *Logan's Run* was far inferior to *Planet Of The Apes*, the comics version worked better, largely because of the imaginative artwork of George Perez. The new direction taken after the conclusion of the adaptation showed promise, but this was never fulfilled since the book was cancelled with the seventh issue.

THE LUCAS PHENOMENON

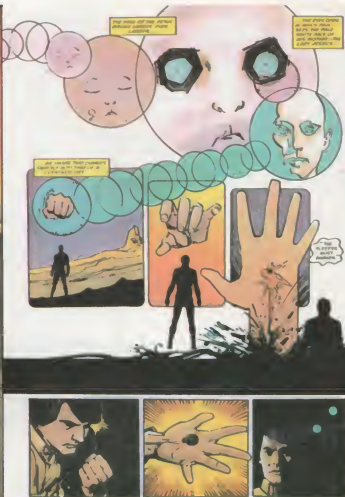
July 1977 saw the final issue of *Logan's Run* and the first issue of Marvel's latest movie-based project: an adaptation of a new, big-budget space opera from the maker of *American Graffiti*, George Lucas. Many people thought the film would prove an expensive fiasco, and Marvel were able to negotiate an advantageous contract which allowed them for the first time to use likenesses of the actors (who were by and large a cast of unknowns). A six-issue adaptation was planned, and if this proved successful new stories would follow. The title of the film? *Star Wars*.

Almost ten years after *2001: A Space Odyssey* had redefined what could be achieved by SF cinema, a

rebel spacecraft bearing a fugitive princess and two lovable robots shot across the cinema screen pursued by the Imperial star ship. It took a full ten seconds for the magnitude of the star ship to be revealed in all its magnificent detail. With the technical expertise of his Industrial Light and Magic production company and a multi-million dollar budget, Lucas had succeeded in turning the wildest imaginings of a generation of young dreamers into a reality. The astonishing special effects surpassed even those of *2001*, and whereas Kubrick's film had portrayed a graceful outerspace ballet, *Star Wars* combined state of the art technology with the action-packed pace of the movie serials of Lucas's youth.

Suddenly Hollywood sat up and took notice of the science fiction film. To the surprise of every movie mogul, *Star Wars* proved to be the cinematic success story of the seventies, and one of the most popular films of all time. The supposed minority appeal of space fantasy was suddenly transformed into one of the few phenomena which could reverse the trend towards dwindling cinema audiences. This time round Hollywood realised the gold mine that was just waiting to be plundered, and the major studios fell over themselves in a rush to put their resources behind a string of mega-hits inspired by the old low-budget serials: *Superman*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*. Each production seemed to achieve even greater box-office returns than the last.

The exceptional success of *Star Wars* was reflected by the comic. Since the first two issues had appeared before the film's release, no one realised that Twentieth Century Fox had such a hit on their hands. The six issues of the comic adapting the movie had to go to an



unprecedented second printing, and were also reprinted as two large sized volumes and a paperback edition. The new stories which followed also proved enormously successful (although not without the odd continuity snafu, such as the episode where Luke's father was shown with Darth Vader!), and the monthly title still remains near the top of Marvel's sales chart.

Star Wars succeeded where the other film adaptations had failed to score, because it caught the crest of the wave of media hype which surrounded the launch of the movie, and in fact became a part of the marketing campaign for the movie itself.

Close Encounters Of The Third Kind was the first deluxe comic adaptation to utilise a higher grade of printing (Marvel Comics Super Special 3, 1978), and it still stands as one of Marvel's most successful adaptations to date. Walt Simonson's artwork is faithfully reproduced, and the colours and details are crisp and bright. Many of the most popular movies of the next few years followed CE3K into the deluxe format, and production values steadily improved (a comparison of Al Williamson's artwork on *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi* will show how much more sophisticated the reproduction techniques have become). Other major SF films (such as *Battlestar Galactica*, *Star Trek*, *Blade Runner* and *Kull*) went through "The Official Comic Book Adaptation" process in subsequent issues of Marvel Comics Super Special, and these stories were also published in standard comic book format for those who could not afford the deluxe editions. In the case of *Battlestar Galactica* and *Star Trek*, regular monthly books detailing the further adventures of the crews of the respective ships were launched.

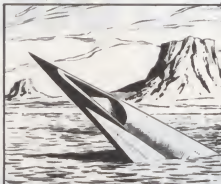
A number of fantasy films were also adapted into the deluxe format: *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, *Dragonslayer*, including *Dark Crystal*, *Fire And Ice* and both *Conan* movies, along with a couple of disaster movies (*Jaws II* and *Meteor*), two James Bond films (*For Your Eyes Only* and *Octopussy*) and, most curious of all, a number of musicals: *Xanadu*, *Annie* and the dreadful *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Recent adaptations have included *Dune*, *Sheena Queen of the Jungle*, *The Last Starfighter*, *Gremlins* and *2010*.

THE INVASION OF THE ADAPTATIONS

Marvel is not the only company to have brought out adaptations of films in recent years. A number of characters from DC Comics have been given the Hollywood treatment – *Superman*, *Supergirl* and *Swamp Thing* – and DC have reciprocated with comics adaptations, which have all been in the style of the original strips. Recently *Star Trek III* was adapted by Mike Barr and Tom Sutton (who produce a monthly *Star Trek* title for DC) which comes across as an extended episode of the comic. Top artist Berni Wrightson teamed up with Stephen King for an adaptation of *Creepshow*, King's tribute to EC horror comics, but both the film and the comics version were distinctly inferior to the original tales on which they were based. Cult artist Jim Steranko produced a highly experimental version of *Outland* for the magazine *Heavy Metal*, but the planned album edition of this never materialised. *Alien* also underwent an independent comics adaptation by Archie Goodwin and Walt Simonson (published in the UK by Futura), but more on this later.

The quality of these adaptations varies enormously. It is clear that many have been rushed out to coincide

with the movies' release. One notorious example of bad timing is *Battlestar Galactica*, where the artist had to squeeze virtually all of the second half of the film into five pages, leaving the plot in a jumbled mess. Fortunately when the book appeared as the first three issues of the monthly comic, Ernie Colon was able to redraw and expand upon the original version, with much more satisfactory results.



Far left: Bill Sienkiewicz's interpretation of *Planet of the Apes*. This page: The first Marvel movie adaptation – *Planet of the Apes*.

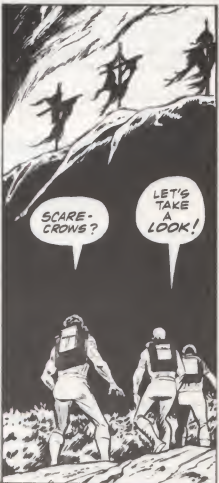
Since comics versions are planned to coincide with a movie's release, the writer and artist usually have to work without seeing the final version of what they are adapting. Screenplays and production sketches are available, although it is impossible to know from these if certain scenes will end up on the cutting room floor. This can lead to fascinating insights into sequences dropped in the final editing: *Star Wars I* has a couple of scenes on Tatooine with Luke Skywalker and Biggs which add poignancy to the climactic battle; and we see more of Roy Neary's family in Marvel's *CEJK*, giving the characters greater depth than they have in the film. Most revealing of all is Marv Wolfman's adaptation of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, where the concept of V'ger searching for his God is dealt with at some length; in the movie this idea is reduced to one line from Bones (no doubt the producers feared being accused of blasphemy). But this can work the other way: the unforgettable moment in *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* where Indy shoots his sword-wielding attacker does not appear in the comic. Obviously this must have seemed too trivial an episode to include when the adaptor read the screenplay.

However, even the best adaptations cannot equal the experience of seeing the original movie. Walt Simonson pulls out all the stops on *CEJK* but nothing can do justice to that moment when the Mother Ship first appears and the cinema audience lets out an involuntary gasp of awe. It used to be said that comics could create adventures too spectacular to achieve in the cinema, but recent technological advances mean that film now can imitate – even surpass – the magic of comic books.

Can a comic book adaptation, then, ever be any more than an illustrated screenplay, and a nice memento to keep alongside the posters and bubble gum cards? Al Williamson's artwork may successfully catch the futuristic film noir style of *Blade Runner*, but compared to the film the comic is somehow lifeless. The professional expertise of the adaptors is not in question, but their efforts seem to be less than the movie, and at the same time less than a successful original comic book. Just occasionally, though, an adaptation comes along that is in its own way as impressive as the film on which it is based. Kirby's *2001* is one example, but perhaps the most successful attempt of all is Goodwin and Simonson's aforementioned version of *Alien*.

Ridley Scott's film is outstanding for its razor-edged pace and the nightmarish designs by the artist Giger, both of which lend themselves to the comic medium. The script of *Alien*: *The Illustrated Story* is terse and powerful, almost entirely gritty dialogue with few explanatory captions. The plot is communicated through Simonson's superlative artwork: sequences of small panels carry the narrative action, leading into occasional one or two page illustrations which bring the climactic moments of the film home with sledgehammer force. The full-colour painting adds atmosphere, and his frenetic pen-lines convey a mood of unrelenting tension which pervades the whole story. Giger's terrifying alien worlds provide the inspiration for the comic's visuals, but Simonson translates them into his own style which perfectly captures the suggestive horror of the film. In the movie, the alien itself lives in the shadows and we only catch glimpses of its repulsive form. Such a device would not work in comics, and Simonson provides a much more explicit realisation of the creature which is every bit as monstrous as the film suggests.

What *Alien* and *2001* have in common is the confidence to bring a personal and unique style to the problem of adapting one medium into another. "The Official Comic Book Adaptation" can be, as its name suggests, a safe, rather bland undertaking, which aims to be little more than another piece of film merchandising. But on the rare occasions when artists like Kirby and Simonson are given the freedom to take the film as a starting point and go their own way with it, the results can be quite astounding. The successful comics version does not try to duplicate the film on paper, but takes it as its inspiration and, in the hands of a master craftsman, becomes something which is – like the original movie – pure magic. ♦



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• IT'S ONLY A MOVIE •

A Column by John Brosnan

Starman is the sort of science fiction movie that makes an old science fiction reader like myself break down and weep. Hardened though I may be from years of watching Hollywood movies that have the label 'science fiction' attached to them, but are as far removed from the real thing as brass is from gold, a film like *Starman* still comes as a shock to my sensibilities. To describe *Starman* as a science fiction film is like calling a sinking ship a submarine...

It's both a stupid movie and an unoriginal one which uses its borrowed science fictional elements simply as a means of contriving a relationship between its two central characters whereas a real sf movie would have had the science fiction element be the crucial core of the story. This is always the best test of an sf movie - if you remove the sf element the story should collapse; if it doesn't one is dealing with a fake sf movie (otherwise known as a sci-fi movie). For example, Peter Hyam's *Outland* is a fake sf movie. You take away its sf element and the story is unaffected, having been lifted from a western, *High Noon*, in the first place.

Starman is similarly fake sf. The Jeff Bridges character doesn't have to be an alien from outer space, he could be an escapee from an oppressive mental hospital and suffering the after-effects of an unnecessary brain operation. This scenario would not only be a better explanation for Jeff Bridges' awful performance but still allow the mawkish relationship between him and the Karen Allen character to develop in the same grindingly predictable way.

Let's look at how the writers, Bruce A. Evans and Reynold Gideon (we name the guinea men!), make up the science fictional rules as they go along in order to fit the demands of their loony plot. Take the opening sequence when we see *Voyager I* enter the atmosphere of an alien planet; now that space probe was only launched in 1977 and though its been travelling for 8 years now it's still going to be a long, long time before it reaches another solar system, if it ever does. Even if it was travelling at a mere quarter of the speed of light, which it isn't, it would take *Voyager II* another 8 years just to reach the nearest star, Alpha Centauri, presuming it was travelling towards that star, which it isn't.

Hang on! I hear someone crying from the back row, *isn't that just petty quibbling? Surely the writers have the right to a little artistic license for the sake of the story?* But as far as I'm concerned that sort of thing isn't artistic license, it's either the result of ignorance on the writers' part or it's a sign of their contempt for the audience. Look at it this way, if you're watching a movie set in the 1800s and you see the hero hop on a sailing ship in London and then you see him arrive in New York while a caption on the screen reads THE FOLLOWING DAY you'd be justified in saying "Hey, that's impossible! What sort of idiots made this film?" And yet if the makers of a so-called science fiction film commit the equivalent blunder we're supposed to accept it as 'artistic license'.

But, continues the voice from the back row, *if the space probe doesn't reach the alien planet you got no movie!* I don't agree. The writers could have selected a slightly more logical rationale, such as having the probe intercepted by an alien spaceship (yes, I know the chances of such an encounter, presuming even that there are alien spaceships out there, is trillions to one; I didn't say it was a logical alternative, only that it was a slightly more logical explanation than that used by the writers).

Okay, let's move on. We see the little space craft leave the alien planet and in no time at all it's entering Earth's atmosphere and is promptly shot down by the American airforce. The craft crashes into a forest, a floating ball of light emerges from the wreckage, enters a house and creates a human body from the genetic information contained in a single hair it finds in a photo album. Now the latter bit is a neat idea. In fact it's the only good idea in the entire movie, especially since the hair belongs to the recently dead husband of the woman living in the house.

This marvellous situation seems to offer a number of potentially interesting possibilities but the writers skillfully manage to avoid all of them and, with the invaluable assistance of Jeff Bridges' Jerry Lewis imitation (with a touch of Stan Laurel thrown in), turn the movie into an extended, downbeat episode of *Mork and Mandy*. The alien, we learn, has only three days to reach the big meteor crater in Arizona. Why? Well, that's when he's due to be picked up by his mother



Would you buy a used ball-bearing off this *Starman*?

ship. The mother ship is obviously on a tight schedule because if he's not there in time it's not going to wait. And if he does miss the boat it's no good him settling on Earth with Ms Allen, even though he'd like to. Why? Well, because his new body will only last for three days after which time he'll drop dead.

Why? It seems a perfectly healthy body, freshly cloned and all that stuff. The only alien thing about it is the mind inhabiting its brain, so why can't it survive on earth for longer than three days? Because the writers say so, that's why. I mean, like everyone else they've seen *E.T.* and *War of the Worlds* etc. and they know it's traditional in sci-fi movies for aliens visiting earth to get pretty ill after awhile (something to do with the water), even if the alien is wearing a clinically human body as in *Starman*.

But if the Jeff Bridges body is only good for three days use, why did the alien bother growing it in the first place? Why didn't it just use one of its magic balls to call home and say,

"Hey, sorry guys, I missed Arizona. I ended up in Wisconsin. Come and pick me up here instead. I'll pay the difference in the fuel bill out of my own pocket..."? (True, it doesn't look as if the alien has any pockets but it must have carried those magic balls in something).

The other big question is why it, or he, has come to Earth in the first place. The suggestion is that the visit is a response to the message plaque on *Voyager II* and that the alien is a kind of anthropologist come to study humanity at first hand, or whatever. But if that's the case why was he heading for a hole in the ground in the middle of Arizona? I mean, it's obvious from the end of the movie that the part of Arizona isn't exactly teeming with humanity. And don't forget it's only going to have three days to do all this humanity-studying before the mother ship came and picked him up. By the time he'd climbed out of the meteor crater, got a road map and found his way to the nearest town it would have been time to go home. Can you imagine his report to his superiors when they ask him what it's like on earth? "Ah... flat. Very flat. Dry too. Not much happening. Deadsville, in fact..."

Of course the real reason he came to earth was to be cute - to be a man-sized version of *E.T.* - and to give Karen Allen a baby. All the other things in the movie are arbitrary devices that exist purely to embroider the love story, like the last minute arrival of the giant, flying ball-bearing (how did it manage to penetrate America's air defences unscathed when the much smaller alien craft at the beginning was easily detected and intercepted?), and the illogical behaviour of the Richard Jaeckel character who wants to submit the alien to vivisection. He's already been told that the alien is an exact genetic duplicate of a dead man so cutting him up wouldn't have provided a scrap of information about the actual alien...

No, *Starman* is a messy mass of inconsistencies, all of which we're supposed to swallow because it's 'science fiction'. It's not even good sci-fi. It was only two redeeming features: the photography by Donald M. Morgan and Karen Allen's performance. As for the director - someone called John Carpenter - he should be ashamed of himself. ■

Now that the 22nd season of *Doctor Who* has finally come to an end, we are reliably informed by the BBC that the series has earned itself a well needed break, until the autumn of 1986. Thank goodness for that! If this means that the good Doctor is to have a complete rest from the dreadful stories he has had to contend with in this year's offering, then I'm not surprised.

But firstly, what of Colin Baker's portrayal? Well, for my money he's a refreshing change after Peter Davison. You may recall that in *Starburst* 70, I had some strong criticisms of the last Doctor. So much so, that Andy Eaton of Cheshire accused me of not watching the 21st season close enough. Well this time Mr Eaton I've studied Colin Baker's first season scrupulously. I've examined every

boring aspect of each and every episode. 'Rubbish' I've been heard to cry from time to time. But in all fairness, my complaints should be constructive. Okay then, let's start at the beginning.

What a surprise (yawn) to discover that the Doctor's first adversary in the new series were the Cybermen. That must have really been a difficult one for the scriptwriters to decide upon. The script wasn't, in actual fact, that bad. A pity that the same could not have been said for the acting.

The sets were very good with the exception of the cyber planet (inhabited by a miserable pair of humans who argued constantly with one another much to my chagrin). I also objected to the ease with which a human can pop a cyber helmet on and assume the look of the enemy. It

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss

destroys the credibility of the Cybermen and only helps to remind us that they are really just actors in silver suits.

Unfortunately the Doctor still resembles the *Macdonalds* fast food clown character more than a space scientist. According to the *Doctor Who* production team, crazy hairdos and camp costumes are still a way of life with our time travelling hero. And although I was told that the 'Whovians' (Mr Eaton's word for *Doctor Who* fans incidentally) loved the tongue-in-cheek way that the TARDIS drifted from place to place as an organ, a piece of antique furniture, etc., I found the whole thing extremely unfunny, totally ridiculous and cheap. How easy it is for a person to pretend that the entrance to the TARDIS is behind the object in question. A constant failing with the Master's time machine I've always thought.

With the Cybermen safely dispatched, the Doctor and his ever whining companion, Peri, landed on a particularly unhappy planet called Varos. A clever plot device here, having two of the stories main characters observing the whole adventure on their 'Big Brother' television screens, while living out their humdrum existences in sets that resembled the interiors of giant orange boxes. Many complaints were received by the BBC regarding the story's gratuitous violence. "Hanging, mutilation and torture" some said! The only torture for me was that I had to watch it!

Accolades to the actor who portrayed the horrible little fiend called Sil (a poor man's Jabba the Hutt). He showed that even when covered in layers of slimy BBC plastic, he could still act the pants off the rest of the cast.

Returning to *Doctor Who* in *Vengeance on Varos* was Martin Jarvis. You may remember that it was he who once menaced Jon Pertwee in *Invasion of the Dinosaurs*.

The other weak point of this story was the cliff-hanger at the end of episode one, when the Doctor collapses in a desert. It was more than obvious to the audience that this was



going to happen ten minutes before the end, and yet the writers insisted on dragging out this tedious conclusion.

Next, the Doctor found himself brushing shoulders with Kate O'Mara as the evil Rani in industrial revolutionary England. Pretty poor effort it was too, made even worse by the appearance of Anthony Ainley as the Master.

In the longest story of the new season, *The Two Doctors*, Colin Baker teamed up with Patrick Troughton (Doctor no.2) and Fraser Hines as Jamie. As usual it took ages for the story to get underway, and once it did it quickly fizzled out. A majority of the programme's budget was completely wasted on location shooting in Spain.

The Two Doctors was probably one of the worst stories of the whole batch. It was like watching an episode of *Fawlty Towers* written by Salvador Dali. Jacqueline Pearce guest starred as the villainess, bent on controlling time travel with the aid of the Sontarans (those fat bellied aliens whose heads never seem to fit their bodies). Their make-up also looked pretty dire in the brilliant Spanish sunshine and horribly uncomfortable.

Pearce was accompanied on her mission to Earth by a cannibalistic alien cook, dressed as a Scotsman. He was to *Rob Roy* his way through the story eating the heads of rats and sampling the flesh of old Spanish ladies. He also killed, in cold blood, one of the Doctor's friends; a fat Englishman who owned a restaurant in Seville. What the viewers were supposed to make of this farcical scene I don't rightly know. The character was too shallow to arouse any sympathy, even if he did die reciting Shakespeare. More than that, he wasn't helped in his death throes by his Basil Fawlty demeanour and the fact that the other guests in the restaurant didn't seem to care whether he was dead or alive. I half expected, during this unnecessary subplot, for the looney chef to start eating him. What a pity that he hadn't already tucked into the scriptwriter before we reached this part of the menu, (sorry, episode!)

Troughton was fun, and it was almost like old times seeing him at the helm of the TARDIS again. But the sight of him with bright orange eyebrows and the appetite of Billy Bunter insulted his original portrayal of the Doctor, and I found myself longing for the stories of old.

The guest star of the next story, *Time Lash*, was Paul Darrow, playing a character very much like (yes, you've guessed it) Avon in *Blakes 7*.



Left: Alexei Sayle, guest starring in Doctor Who, as a DJ on the planet Necros from *Revelation of the Daleks*. Above: The title stars of *The Two Doctors*, Patrick Troughton and Colin Baker. Below: Sarah Berger as Rost from *Attack of the Cybermen*.

Come back Verity Lambert. Where are you when we need you?

In the last story of the season the Daleks re-appeared looking very spruced up. As usual, with the present attitude to the Doctor's character, he took ages to get involved in the plot. Spending most of the first episode wandering around the snowy wastes of the planet Necros; arguing constantly with Peri, who whined on relentlessly about the climate, her clothes, her breakfast, the Doctor's logic, the snow, brick walls, statues, etc. etc. While the Doctor and Peri admired the winter wonderland and another nasty alien tried to take a bite out of them, Davros (now literally head and shoulders above the rest of the cast) droned on incomprehensibly about how he was going to destroy the Time Lord.

Guest star Clive Swift was very good, but the less said about Jenny Tomasin and Bridget Lynch-Blosse the better. What a treat Eleanor Bron and William Gaunt were, helping the comical script to struggle out from under the weighty dialogue. At last, I thought, someone with talent after 12 weeks of waiting. But when the story lapsed into a cameo appearance by Alexei Sayle my fingers hovered over the on/off button.

What of the future? Well apart from

the fact that the commotion over *Doctor Who*'s cancellation is political in order to 'up' the licence fee, I think the series really is in trouble. It's never sunk as low as this before. If for no other reason, let's hope it returns next year with a new look Colin Baker, some new companions and, more importantly, a new production team. Otherwise I think I'll stick with, as Mr Eaton so eloquently puts it in



his letter, "*Battlestar Galactica*, or some similar high gloss soap, where the story concept can be understood from the opening titles".

Mystery in Space

In July ITV will be screening a feature length whodunnit film entitled *Murder in Space*. Promoted as "international event", this made for TV film is a £3 million co-production between Zenith Productions (the feature film subsidiary of Central TV, which produced Nicholas Roeg's *Insignificance* due for release later this year, and at present has *Billy The Kid* and the *Green Baize Vampire* - purportedly a musical fantasy - in production), CTV in Canada and the Movie Channel in America.

The film will be televised simultaneously in the three countries in mid-July, but this isn't the whole picture. Instead viewers will see two hours of the film without the solution to the mystery. At this point the viewers will be asked to take part in an international competition by writing to their respective stations and submitting their own deductions as to the identity of the killer(s). Then in October the final 15 minutes of the film will be screened and all will be revealed!

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RECORD WORLD

Reviews by Mat Irvine

Following the original Kubrick masterpiece, *2001*, cannot have been easy for director Peter Hyams, especially after the 18 year gap between the two films. Wisely Hyams did not follow the path taken by Kubrick and instead of using the Deutsche Grammophon catalogue, took the more usual step of commissioning a newly composed score. However, it is possibly worth remembering that *2001* itself had a specially composed score at one stage – I wonder what happened to that? But whatever prompted the choice of abandoning this new music and resorting to the classical repertoire, it was certainly a large factor in the success of *2001*, for if any film needed an expansive musical score, this was it.

As I hope I've attempted to establish in this column in the past, the musical accompaniment to a film can sometimes make or break it. Some work, some don't. Some only work in the context of the visual image. By using established pieces you have at least got around the last problem, for they are designed to stand up on their own, and maybe the film can give them a new lease of life.

This is certainly true of the piece of music that has become in the very sense of the words – *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It started life as a relatively obscure Symphonic Poem by Richard Strauss, and I suspect everything bar the opening chords also remain fairly obscure. But the low organ notes that summon the opening titles of 2007 brought Also Sprach Zarathustra to the forefront of film themes. I wondered if the sequel could get away without using the theme. First indications were that one of Genesis's founder members, the keyboard player Tony Banks, had been commissioned to write the score. And as I read it first in *Starburst* it must be true! This did not seem an unreasonable choice. Banks had recently written the score for the re-make of *The Wicked Lady*, and earlier supplied the soundtrack, along with fellow Genesis member Mike Rutherford, for *The Shout*. But then, according to the early publicity for *2010*, the music was by David Shire. But there was no indication if Zarathustra was retained.

The impact of the music from the first film was so great that it spawned many 'cover' versions and even a

ODYSSEY SPECIAL



2001: A Space Odyssey Volume Two – music inspired by the film. For it wasn't just the awe inspiring theme, the whole musical accompaniment was meticulously chosen to match the images.

How many *Starburst* readers can listen to the *Blue Danube* without seeing spaceships? Probably one of the most brilliant juxtapositioning of music ever in a film. Or perhaps if you hear Aram Khatchaturian's adagio from his *Gayane Ballet Suite*, you cannot fail to visualise Bowman in his circumferential jog around the interior of *Discovery*?

Volume Two continued the general theme, by utilising two more Ligeti pieces, plus one by the modern German composer Anton Webern. The Strauss waltz theme was also continued with extracts from *Coppélia*, by Delibes, and *Faust* by Gounod. To add to the confusion, a waltz by Richard Strauss was also included, along with another extract from Also Sprach Zarathustra and *The Blue Danube* Strauss.

BBC Television took the Zarathustra theme as their own for the Apollo Mission studios, and dug out an old recording by a disbanded orchestra as their version. This was probably the only straightforward 'classical' piece of music ever to get into the pop charts. Several 'rock' versions

were recorded, including one by Deodato which to my mind was the only one that really worked. Synthesiser players have also had a go at it. Tomita includes it on his *Cosmos* album.

2010 does use the Zarathustra theme, and also uses one of the Ligeti pieces as well. Three of the Hungarian compositions were used in *2001*, the long titled *Requiem for Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Two Mixed Chorus and Orchestra* – the 'Monolith Theme'; *Lux Aeterna* – the 'Moonbus Theme' and *Atmospheres* – the 'Stargate Theme'. The sequel opens with *Lux Aeterna* over the stills that tell the story of the first film. Then, in almost the same style of *2001*, the title sequence uses Also Sprach Zarathustra, although it lacks some of the grandeur of the first film (this is only Wide Screen after all; *2001* was Cinema). And the alignment of the Moon, Earth and Sun has also been replaced with the sunrise over the Very Large Array at Socorro, New Mexico.

The *2010* soundtrack album does not open in the same manner. Instead of an orchestral Zarathustra we get another cover version, this time by Andy – The Police – Summers, which does not actually appear in the film. However the rest of the album is David Shire, and one other passing

reference to Zarathustra is made towards the very end.

David Shire has composed for both film and television and won an Oscar for his score to *Norma Rae*. He also scored *All The President's Men* and *Saturday Night Fever* (well, the bits the Bee Gees didn't do). The music for *2010* is almost entirely electronic, with Shire being assisted by Craig Huxley, who also engineered the recordings. Only two sections are orchestral, and arranged by that veteran of film scores, Herbert Spencer. *New Worlds*, which leads into the *2001* Theme, plus the ending *New World's Theme From 2010*, are the only orchestral pieces, played by an un-named, so presumably session, orchestra. Strangely these pieces have a feel very similar to the *Star Trek III* score!

It is the type of soundtrack album that requires quite a few listens. There are themes rather than tunes and remind me in places of John Carpenter's *The Fog* more than anything. The record sleeve approach for *2010* matches *2001: Volume Two* almost exactly, rather than the original soundtrack album. They both use the *Star Child* as the cover. This is the third time this approach has been used, for yet another spin-off came from CBS which released a recording of the *2001* music, coupled with music from the opera *Aniara* – *An Epic of Space Flight in 2038 AD*, which used the *Star Child* theme against a star backing.

The *2010* soundtrack is definitely a must for the collector, and remember Arthur Clarke has promised '20,001' – The Final Odyssey' which should be finished by December 1989 after the author has had time to digest and incorporate the findings of the Jovian probe, Galileo. So, when that novel is finally filmed the '20,001' soundtrack album will complete the set!

2001: A Space Odyssey – soundtrack (MGM Records CS 8078)

2010 – soundtrack, composed by David Shires (A & M Records SP 5038)

2001: A Space Odyssey Volume Two (Polydor Records Super 2310 073)

2001: A Space Odyssey and Aniera (CBS Records 61772)

Sprach Zarathustra (2001) – Deodato from the album *Prelude* (CTI Records CTL 10)

• DATA BANK •

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary

At ease, troops, it's time for Starburst's answer to Bamber Gascoyne to provide this month's helping of education and edification. Yes, it's time for Dr Sally Gary's Data Bank (applause).

CARRERA AND KEIL COME-BACK

What would I do without Starburst's knowledgeable readers? Mick Black wrote in to correct a few omissions from the Barbara Carrera and Richard Keil filmographies I included back in issue 78. Sez Mick, "Your Carrera filmog could do with the following: *Billy Jack* (1971, bit-part), *The Master Gunfighter* (1975), *When Time Ran Out* (1979)." Mick, a completist if ever there was, also goes on to list some TV appearances: *The Antagonists* (1980, mini-series), *Matt Houston* (1982, TV-pilot) and *Centennial* (1978, mini-series).

And as for Richard Keil, Mick lists *Skidoo* (1968), *The Mean Machine* (1974), *So Fine* (1981) and *Hysterical* (1982).

Thanks for that, Mick... you rat!

BATTY QUESTION

"Could you please try to tell me," writes John Hughes of Bristol, "where the new Batman film, *The Return of Batman*, with Adam West and Burt Ward is being made, as I am a great fan of the TV show?"

Huh? First I heard of it. I'll have to leave this one to Tony Crawley, John. I only deal with movie data that has passed into history. T.C. handles *Things to Come*. (I can't resist observing that West and Ward are probably a little long in the tooth for such roles, these days. I mean, Robin is supposed to be about 18, right? Burt



Above: "You'll get those dance steps right if I have to kill ya!" threatens this gun-tottin' character in *Zombies of Stratosphere* (1952). Below: Pretty gross, huh?

Ward has to be 40 now! But then age has never been a barrier for film folk... look at Roger Moore.)

WHERE'S JO BETH?

A quickly from Johnny Hines of Derby. He wants to know if the *Pc/tergeist* mum, Jo Beth Williams, has made any more fantasy films. The only one I know of Johnny, is *Endangered Species* (1982), a nerve-gas accident tale which starts out as a UFO mystery. Unreleased here except on video.

HELEN DAMNATION

Zelazny fan Helen Donaldson wants to know if I can give her cast and credits on the Zelazny-based film, *Damnation Alley* (1971). Sure can:

Dir: Jack Smight; Scr: Alan Sharp/Lukas Heller from the Zelazny novel; Ph: Harry Stradling Jr; Mus: Jerry Goldsmith; Prod Des: Preston Ames; SPFX: Milt Rice; Laser Anim: Mimi Gramatki; Micro Ph: Ken Vincent. Starring:

Jan-Michael Vincent, George Peppard, Dominique Sanda, Paul Winfield, Robert Donner, Seamon Glass.

MORE MECHANICS

"Was that Robbie the Robot I saw in the background of the convention scene in *Grem-lins?*" asks Ray Griffith of Tooting, London. Yes, Ray, it certainly was.

YOU CAN'T BE SERIAL!

Shawn Richards from Stirling is looking for info on a serial which featured a robot that looked like a central heating boiler (his description, not mine!) Not giving me much to go on, Shawn. Besides, all movie serial robots looked like central heating boilers. Still, I think I know the one you mean. The boiler robots first appeared in *The Undersea Kingdom* (1936), where they were called Volkites. Then again in *The Mysterious Dr Satan* (1940). After that they spent 12 years in the Republic broom closet/props

store until they were dusted off for 1952's *Zombies of the Stratosphere*.

MAKEUP MUSINGS

A two-parter from Gilly Medina, who wants to see a gooeey still from *The Incredible Melting Man* (1977).



which was one of Rick Baker's earliest credits. Done, Gilly! Also, could I identify the makeup artist who designed the alien masks for *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958). This, of course, was the late Charles Gemora, who incidentally shared Rick Baker's fascination with gorillas. Charlie

made the costumes for and appeared in *The Gorilla* (1939), *War of the Worlds* (1953, as the martian), *Phantom of the Rue Morgue* (1954, as a gorilla), *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (that's Charlie in the still) and *Jack the Giant Killer* (1962). Gemora died in 1961, aged 58.

DEVIL OF A RACE

Here's one of those "this is the plot, what do you know about the picture?" type questions that I love so much. Philip Kemp of Harrow sent me a letter in which he described the plot of *Race With The Devil* (a group of people in a motorised caravan are chased o'er hill and dale by a bunch of demented devil worshippers, then thinking they've escaped are surrounded by their pursuers at the end of the picture). Okay, here we go:

Race With the Devil (1975). Starring Peter Fonda (Roger), Warren Oates (Frank), Loretta Swit (Alice), Lara Parker (Kelly), R.G. Armstrong (Sher-

iff Taylor), Clay Tanner (Jack Henderson), Carol Blodgett (Ethel Henderson), Jack Starrett (Gas Station Attendant), Wes Bishop (Deputy Dave).

Dir: Jack Starrett, Scr: Wes Bishop and Lee Frost, Ph: Robert Jessup, Ed: Allan Jacobs and John Link, SPFX: Richard Helmer, Mus: Leonard Rosenman, Prod: Wes Bishop, Exec Prod: Paul Maslansky. Time: 88 mins.

TERMINATOR STAR

David Niedzailek asks for information on Linda Hamilton, the actress who had the female lead in the recent socko exploitationer *The Terminator*.

I'm afraid I can't help you with a fan club for the lady, Dave. As far as I know there isn't one (unless you Starbursters want to tell me different). I think *The Terminator* was her first movie role. Not been very helpful, have I? Okay, here's a colour pic of your heroine as a consolation prize.



Above: One of an Endangered Species? Jo Beth Williams. Left: Linda Hamilton. The Terminator was out to exterminate her!



ADDITIONAL INFO

Keith Dudley of the Hammer International organisation has come to my rescue on two questions I had trouble with in *Starburst 75*. First, an update of horror actor Mike Raven. Apparently, after filming *Disciple of Death* (1973) Raven headed back to his homeland of South Africa, which is why we've heard little of him since. As a matter of fact, we heard little of him before that too, as he had a slight speech impediment and was dubbed in most of the films he appeared in. Keith also pointed out that the sacrifice victim in *Twins of Evil* is Maggie Wright, an ex-Bluebell Girl who also appeared in *Rasputin the Mad Monk* (1966), *Goldfinger* (1965), *Casino Royale* (1967), *Nicholas and Alexandra* (1971), *What's New Pussycat* (1965), *Yesterday's Hero* (1979) and *Joseph*

Andrews (1977). She also appeared in the TV series *Department S*, *Jason King*, *Robin's Nest* and *The Martian Chronicles*. She now works as an announcer on TV5. Thorough, Keith. Very thorough.

Lee Hopewell wrote to tell me about Maggie Wright too. And added that Mad Max's car is an Australian manufactured XA Ford Falcon GT Phase 3 HO Coupe. I'll take your word for it, Lee, though it sounds like you're making it all up!

And that's about all we have space for this month. If you have a question that's bothering you, why not share it?

Send all your fantasy related trivia questions to:

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NEXT

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